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FIVE PLAYS

By GEORGE FITZMAURICE



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THE COUNTRY DRESSMAKER
THE MOONLIGHTER
THE PIE-DISH
THE MAGIC GLASSES
THE DANDY DOLLS

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE COUNTRY DRESSMAKER	I
THE MOONLIGHTER	59
THE PIE-DISH	135
THE MAGIC GLASSES	157
THE DANDY DOLLS	179



THE COUNTRY DRESSMAKER

CHARACTERS

JULIA SHEA, *a country dressmaker.*

NORRY SHEA, *her mother.*

MATT DILLANE, *their neighbour.*

MIN, *his daughter.*

MICHAEL CLOHESY, *a strong farmer.*

MARYANNE, *his wife.*

BABE }
ELLIE } *their daughters.*

JACK, *their son.*

PATS CONNOR, *a returned American.*

LUKE QUILTER, *the man from the mountains.*

EDMUND NORMYLE.

THE SCENE IS LAID IN KERRY.

*Time—The First and Second Acts occur on the same day;
the Third Act after an interval of three weeks.*

ACT I

SCENE.—*Interior of NORRY SHEA'S kitchen. At left is the entrance door. Window at right of door. Small deal table under window. Dresser at left. Fireplace at right.*
JULIA SHEA is seated on sugar chair right of table, reading a novelette. She puts it down, takes a photograph out of a small box on table, and looks at it.

JULIA. When I do look at his likeness, I do be ashamed of the little doubts that come to me of late. But how can I help them and the way you are all reflecting on Pats and set on my marrying Edmund Normyle? Ah, God knows what struggles Pats has in Pittsburg to make that pile he writes about to the Clothesys. (*Takes up novelette.*) Lady Gwendolen, how true she was to Sir Geoffrey, and all the temptations that came her way! She had a sound and loyal heart. (MIN DILLANE comes in unperceived.) Still, she never thought more of him than I do of Pats. Ah, Pats, Pats, the wide world hasn't the equal or the likes of you, Pats Connor.

MIN. Well, Julia Shea, you're the show of the world with that old likeness, gaping and moaning over it these seven years and more.

JULIA. Min Dillane, it's very abrupt you are entirely. (*Pause.*) If you only knew what it was to have the right love. If you had only known Pats Connor!

MIN (*yawns*). Some say he was a vain little fellow, then, a little dandy, as proud of his curls as a peacock. 'Twas said he used the curling-tongs itself on a pattern day or going to a dance.

JULIA (*shakes head*). Backbiters ! 'Twasn't in need of the curling-tongs he was, the curls fell in pure little natural waves down on his forehead, and he used always wear the cap back on his poll.

MIN. Pshough ! I never like to see curls on a boy.

[*Sits at table.*

JULIA (*replacing photograph in box*). There are curls and curls. If I could describe to you Pats's !

MIN. It's all one. Curls or no, people once they go away are never the same again. The like of your love and faith was never seen, to be having hopes of him all these years, the way he has acted and all.

JULIA. You are all of one mind, all down on him, and the wide ocean is between us. 'Twas the same with Sir Geoffrey. 'Twas the hard word they had on him, and the aunt setting them on, and she wanting Gwendolen to marry that black-hearted Lord Maltravers. But she stuck to him for twenty years, and she not knowing what became of him in foreign parts. (*Showing paper to MIN.*) There's the picture where he's folding her in his arms after coming back. The villain, Lord Maltravers, is going out the parlour door, and it's a terrible look he's giving Gwendolen and Sir Geoffrey. I'm done with it, and you can take the paper now to your mother.

MIN (*after a pause*). That's a wonderful tall man, and he dressed out in the "sut" that's letting the fellow out the door with the hump. They don't know he's there at all, and the way they are clapped up to one another in the middle of the floor. (*Turns over pages.*) Julia, you must have a great head, and to be reading all this print in the *Family Reader*.

The Country Dressmaker 5

In five minutes my eyes would be swimming, and it's like a megrum would come in my head. (*Folds paper.*) You have mother as bad as yourself over it—her eyes streaming for a full half-hour over the lady in the last number that smothered herself in the rushes and slush.

JULIA. Poor Inez ! It's more sinned against than sinning she was. Min, 'twas the saddest thing I ever read to have her go and drown herself in the dark water, and the night winds whistling through the reeds.

MIN. Oh, Julia, isn't it a great brain you have entirely itself, and to be keeping all that in your head ? 'Twas "reeds," not "rushes," mother read out in sure. (*Pause.*) Still, Michael Mick Ned says he wouldn't give a pin's point for all that's in the *Family Reader*, but he'd swear by the *Budget* and all the murders and fine newes and things that do be in it.

JULIA. Hesht ! Is that your father's voice I hear ? (*Rises and looks out window.*) It's calling to my mother he is, and she coming up the path with the costerwaun for the hens.

MIN. He'll be coming in, Julia. I'm thinking he'll be wanting you to make up your mind over Edmund Normyle this evening.

JULIA. Min Dillane, it's distracted I am ; it's distracted I am entirely. Why can't they leave me go my own way ? Wherefore should Matt Dillane be so hard upon me at all ?

MIN. Why then, Julia, it's the staunch friend he is to your mother and yourself.

JULIA. 'Tisn't a word I'd be saying against him : I'd walk on my knees to serve him if he wasn't so impatient in himself.

MIN. 'Tis for your good he is. They'll be in on us. I hear them saluting. (*Rises.*) Well, I won't be staying here

6 The Country Dressmaker

talking like a boolumshee. I only came hither for my blouse for myself.

JULIA. Min, don't be wild with me. There's a few stitches yet wanting to it. I'll finish it if I have to wait up till dawn to have it in time for you for the Races. I had to do that dress for Ellie Clohesy or she'd have my life.

MIN. Oh, I'll engage the Clohesys will always get the best of it, and there's nothing thought of the next-door neighbours. It's the people far away . . .

JULIA. Here's Matt Dillane, here's your father coming. Come up in the room and try on the blouse again, Min, till we see how it looks on you in the daylight.

[*They go into room.* NORRY SHEA followed by MATT DILLANE comes in ; she empties apron of costerwaun near dresser.

MATT. No, Norry Shea, though Edmund Normyle is a friend to me from the Ahern woman itself, it's a long sight better I think of you and your daughter. Twenty years we have been near neighbours, and a bad word hasn't passed between us. I was so ashamed before the people I had to speak to Edmund Normyle to bring him to some resolution ; and let the blame be on herself if she lets him go and he comes over this threshold no more. That's if he has the spunk now itself, the booby, to keep away from her.

NORRY. He do be hoping all and all along that she'd change in the end, Matthew.

MATT. Pshough ! If he had any spirit in him she might think something of him, but he craving and craving of her week in week out these three years. I do be prancing above in the haggard when I see him coming along sneaking and stealing over the bounds ditch ! I do be wild ! I'd like to give him a kick !

NORRY. There isn't a turn in her, Matthew, unknown to

The Country Dressmaker

7

me, and times of late it comes before me she's softening towards Edmund Normyle.

MATT. She has taken a long day to consider over it. Well, now, was there ever the likes of this woman seen on the face of the globe, waiting on her own hearth for this man, Pats Connor, that's gone out of her sight for ten years, and she not knowing for a surety what canter he is on at all ?

NORRY. Don't blame her, Matthew. It's grew into her from pondering. God forgive me, but she thinks there's something . . . (*pause*) something wonderful in Pats Connor.

MATT. There is ! If there was plain good in him itself ! But he showed his kidney, and the return he gave you, and he fed out of your house after he being thrown on the world an orphan. I'll engage it isn't a five-pound note he'll send you of a Christmas.

NORRY. He sent but one pound and a letter to myself the first year he went.

MATT. According to their own account, he writes to the Clohesys, the big people, though it was a hard do of it he had with Michael the year before he left for America, connections though they were itself.

NORRY. They are the sorrowful Clohesys to us. If they kept the newes and photographs they get from him to themselves, 'tis long ago she'd have the thought of Pats Connor out of her head.

MATT. Misfortune followed whoever had dealings with the Clohesys. There's a bad strain in them wherever they came from the first day. But let me speak easy. They're a big clan now in the parish.

NORRY. It's no gainer she is by the Clohesys, Matthew. She don't get paid a quarter for what work she does for them. She loses custom by leaving others back for their sake, if a

8 The Country Dressmaker

Sports or Races is coming on, little as she gets to do now, the people are so hard to be pleased and they all running to the town dressmakers.

MATT. Aren't Babe and Ellie the finest people in the world by her, and why should she charge them? Don't she get newes?

MIN (*coming out of room*). I could nearly hear what you were saying, father, and as high as you spoke once.

MATT. That you mightn't hear worse, then, between this and the day you'll be married!

NORRY. Is Julia above?

MIN. Leave her alone for a while. She's just started to put the last stitch in Ellie Clohesy's skirt. Let her finish it while she's at it till she'll be fresh to go at my blouse to-night. Here's Edmund Normyle and a stranger, and they coming over the field. From what I know 'twill be no joke to make this match, I'm thinking.

NORRY. 'Twill be a terrible thing, Matthew, if herself and Edmund part for good. The roses will soon fade from her two cheeks, my lovely girl, and will she leave a good man go by the door?

MATT. We'll hope she'll show some splink now that it is coming to a finish.

NORRY. This will be a sorrowful day, I'm thinking. Not one of my name was ever in the Workhouse, not one of the Driscolls of Knockanasieg. But it is foreshown to me these months and years that I'll bring disgrace on my name, that I'll get a pauper's funeral, Matt Dillane.

MATT. You're a hardy woman yet, Norry Shea, and didn't I think you had a deal more faith! Come now, put a good face on it, and let us reason cases plainly and sharply with her. (*Pause.*) There's one thing troubling me; this man he is bringing with him from the mountains to argue her, this

Luke Quilter, that he has all the faith in, is not a suitable person, I'm thinking. She is too refined a woman to be cross-hackled by a mountainy man, that's used to a different class, and it's stomached she'll get at his play-acting. That would give her an excuse not to listen to us at all, and it would be the same old story again with that creature of a boy.

NORRY. The mountainy man might have some way with him, Matthew. He can do no harm and the way we are. He might put reason into her and let us be patient.

[LUKE QUILTER and EDMUND NORMYLE come in.

LUKE (*at door*). God bless the woman of the house ! (*They shake hands.*) Put the hand there, brown Matthew. My dear man, it isn't a grey rib you have in the whisker and you turned sixty. And it's as hardy as a jack-snipe you are yourself, Norry Shea.

NORRY. Mr. Quilter ! Edmund ! Do ye be sitting down now. Don't mind that rickety form. Take the chairs, what sparing have ye on them ! (*EDMUND sits on sugar chair near table, LUKE on chair at fire.*) Ye'll be having a scald now, and ye after a long hardshipping walk ?

LUKE. Look here to me . . .

NORRY. It's no trouble at all ; the teapot's on the hearth. It's there since morning.

LUKE. Pshough ! What do strong able men like us want with tea in the middle of the broad noonday ? Don't attempt it.

NORRY. There's a great shame on me, but the way I'm upset in myself put it out of my head, not to have something lively to put before you, Mr. Quilter, the day that's in it itself.

LUKE. My dear woman, not another syllable out of your mouth now. There is no need on one of the Driscolls of Knockanasieg to be excusing herself. Let the night of the

10 The Country Dressmaker

wedding be the night of the feasting. But 'tis a queer early hour of the day for us to come match-making.

MATT. Hesht, man ! This is not match-making in the general way.

LUKE. If it was, 'tisn't here I'd be. I only now practise in special and extraordinary cases, Matt Dillane.

MATT. Ptse ! [NORRY *shakes head at him.*

LUKE. But this boy would have his way. He'd be a pure lunatic if he had to wait for the fall of the evening, which is the proper time to go match-making, let it be plain or fancy. He was over to me before I was half through with the breakfast. "And will you come where you know ?" says he ; he's shy, and he ashamed to look up. That was at nine o'clock. Well . . .

EDMUND. No, faith, Luke, it was wanting fifteen minutes to ten by our alarmer.

LUKE. Have manners, sir, and don't contradict.

EDMUND. I wouldn't belie you, Luke, but . . .

LUKE (*to NORRY*). My good woman, within the hour he had wheeled hither to me five times again, and the next hour 'twas a case of backwards and forwards with him. I had to be soothering and coaxing him to keep him easy, but in the heel, he panting and the eyes flying out of his head with the foherough that was on him, out of pure compassion I gave in, so we hoisted our sails and down with us.

NORRY. The hour of the day don't signify, Mr. Quilter, if it's good you'll do in it.

LUKE. 'Twill be as right as paint, my dear woman, and make your mind easy. I've been thinking the case over to myself all night and day, and I have a plan that will surely diddle her if all else fails. But let this boy here be dumb. If he attempts to open his awkward mouth while I am going on with my capering, he'll spoil all my ingenuity.

The Country Dressmaker 11

EDMUND (*rising*). I'll be as quiet as a mouse for myself. Norry, is Julia above in the room ?

LUKE. Let her be where she is and take a smoke for yourself. (*To NORRY.*) Whisper. Julia is a bit over twenty-seven, I'm thinking ?

NORRY. She is . . . a little. But you needn't be saying much about that in other places, Mr. Quilter.

LUKE. 'Tis little you know of the man from the mountains. Don't be having any doubt on my power to persuade this strange daughter of yours, Norry Shea. It's my delight to tackle a contrary woman. I'm noted for that all over Cornamona. Since I married the third wife I'm like Alexander the Great that didn't know what to do with himself after he conquering the wide world. Peg M'Assy, the poor thing, is as quiet and obedient as a tame duck. But in the two more, God rest them, ha ! 'Twas there Luke Quilter showed himself the master !

MATT. That is no way to speak of the dead.

LUKE. My dear man, don't be talking foolish. In forty years we'll be all dead and the wind blowing over us. There won't be a whisper of you, Matt Dillane, in Croughderg, nor of me above in Cornamona.

MATT. Leave that aside. I'd like to make one remark. This woman, Julia Shea . . .

NORRY. Matt ! Matt !

MATT. Julia Shea . . . not alluding to her notions . . . is a well-learned woman. There is no good in starting a game of hambug and raumeis with her likes I can tell you, Luke Quilter. My intention was, to reason cases with her in a serious fashion, and leave it to her sense of what was dutiful and good. Then let her choose once and for all and for ever, and let there be no going back on it.

LUKE. You have no brain. The worst way in the world

12 The Country Dressmaker

to tackle a woman is to put the question direct to her. She can't bear it. You'd be talking of duty and Julia would be thinking of to-morrow week.

[*JULIA comes out of room with parcel. She goes rapidly to dresser and places parcel on it.*

NORRY. Julia, don't be so shy in yourself. But come back and shake hands with Mr. Quilter, and he a great stranger in our house. It's hardly you know her at all, Mr. Quilter, I'm thinking.

LUKE. Know her ! God rest the poor woman's soul, isn't she the dead image of her Aunt Mag ? I'd know her in a fair, and I'd nearly say you were a fine class of a woman, Julia Shea.

JULIA. Mr. Quilter, a good day to you.

[*She fiddles with parcel on dresser.*

LUKE. Come hither to me, my lady.

MATT. Oh fodha, this will never tell.

NORRY (*catching MATT by arm*). Let him try his hand, Matt. Be patient.

[*JULIA turns slowly round. She leans against dresser.*

LUKE. Come, come, my good girl, and don't be distant in yourself.

JULIA. Mr. Quilter, it isn't a short answer I'd be making to a stranger, but it's a rude kind of a man you are, I'm thinking.

LUKE (*to NORRY aside*). In the turn of a hand I'll be in a lump of sugar. As the book says, when the mountain wouldn't come to Mahomet, Mahomet he had to go to the mountain. (*Rises.*) Don't be in dread of me now. It's a good gaze I want to get of you, to see what's wonderful in Julia Shea above Bridget Gildea. (*Pause, shakes head, laughs.*) What's come over this unfortunate boy, Edmund

Normyle, and Bridget Gildea all but out of her mind on account of him ? What . . .

JULIA. Mr. Quilter, 'twasn't to-day or yesterday I advised Edmund to take her and she fond of him. (*Tosses her head.*) But Julia Shea does not set up for beauty, Mr. Quilter. She knows she's no patch on the strong able woman from Cornamona, Bridget Gildea.

LUKE. Isn't it an awkward man I am, and the way I do be expressing myself ? 'Tisn't on Julia Shea's beauty I'd be reflecting, howbe the brown girl is the queen of Cornamona ; and in 'the whole parish itself, where's the brown girl could match the beauty of Bridget Gildea ? Still, Julia Shea, and you black-haired itself, in the comparison of pure loveliness I'd place you a quarter above Bridget Gildea. (*JULIA laughs.*) Only it wasn't to comeliness I was alluding at all, my dear girl, and you taking me short, but to age. Age !

JULIA. Age !

LUKE. Age ! Age ! Age is a woeful and a terrible misfortune.

JULIA (*sharply*). It's myself that has worn my age, Mr. Quilter, and I'll thank you to remember it.

LUKE (*laughing*). That's a curious remark for a young woman to make and she in her prime.

JULIA (*laughing*). I don't understand you at all, and the way you are saying things backwards and forwards.

LUKE. It's a young woman you are by yourself, but in the comparison with Bridget Gildea you wouldn't be such a young woman at all. And when I'm thinking of age it's alluding I am to the difference in the years that have passed over Julia Shea and over Bridget Gildea. I was at the christening of Bridget Gildea ; but it was plain to me what your age was, and you opening your eyes full wide at the dresser. It's by her eye I judge the age of a female.

14 The Country Dressmaker

JULIA (*tosses head*). Females must be animals according to mountainy people, I am thinking, and the way you reflect on them.

LUKE. There's a new light for every year till the day comes when the lights begin to dull. Then comes age, age, age ! God help us, there's no cure for age ! It's a while you are from age yet, Julia Shea, but Bridget Gildea is in the first flush of youth, hardly nineteen itself ; your age by the lights is twenty-three years and six months.

JULIA. Well, it's a sharp man you are surely. (*Laughs.*)

LUKE (*speaking solemnly*). Julia Shea, at twenty-five the spring of life is gone for evermore.

JULIA (*half to herself*). Lady Gwendolen was thirty-seven when Sir Geoffrey came back.

LUKE. Now, look here to me. At thirty a single woman is an old withered hag, and there's no more about her in this world.

JULIA. Nonsense. At thirty a woman isn't so very far advanced, or at thirty-two itself.

LUKE. Muceerough ! Thirty or thirty-two ! I give up a woman that isn't married for herself at twenty-five. They'd pelt her likes off the streets in America if the Yanks caught her head outside the door.

JULIA (*angrily*). I wouldn't believe that at all.

LUKE. The wide world knows the Yanks goes to meet the ships. They call the new ones "green," and it's looking for fresh young girls they do be when they goes to the ships. They grin at the sight of a female if she was over seventeen, and she'd want to be Venus herself to get a man and she but a trifle over twenty.

JULIA. A girl of seventeen or twenty ! What is she but a pure child ?

LUKE. My dear girl, it's a different view the Yanks take of

The Country Dressmaker 15

it ; and if a single Yank comes home and he as grey as the hills, it's the youngest girl in the house he'll be looking for. It's strange to me that a woman of your reading should be waiting for a Yank, and the small encouragement he has given you itself. If I was in your two shoes I'd sooner marry a tinker than wait for a Yank. It's a lone goslin' through the world you'll be going to the end of your days on account of him. God help the woman that would have her teeth wore waiting on the chance of a Yank coming over the seas to her !

JULIA (*angrily*). I won't listen to you, Mr. Quilter ; it's too presumptuous you are entirely for a strange man, I'm thinking.

[*Turns her back on him.*]

MATT (*to NORRY*). Psh ! Didn't I foretell ? (*Sniffs.*)

NORRY (*catching him by arm*). Matt ! Matt !

LUKE (*speaking slowly*). My dear girl, it's the truth you have. Myself and Edmund Normyle aren't refined or Inglified, and we had better be going for ourselves and not to be staying where there's no welcome for us.

JULIA. I wouldn't be taking you short, Mr. Quilter, if you wouldn't be reflecting on things. There might be other matters to talk about.

LUKE. For what should I be talking when I'll get no rehearing ?

JULIA. We needn't be speaking of Yanks at all. There's other subjects you could talk of surely.

LUKE. We will, and there won't be no crossness between us. It's of love we'll be talking. (*JULIA laughs.*) It's to tell you about this man I want. Your heart would soften if it was of flint itself if you knew the way he does be above in Cornamona. When the day's grand with the sun shining above in the heavens he do be in great wind, and hope and joy do be in him. It's smiling like a half fool he does be to himself and he listening to the thrushes and blackbirds and

16 The Country Dressmaker

robineens singing in the little crough below the house, for it's your own voice he thinks he hears amongst them and they making ceol.

EDMUND (*seated on chair at fire, turning round*). I' faith, Luke, and who told you . . .

LUKE. But when the day is dull and chilly and the grey rain comes fleeping down Knockroe, he do be lonesome in himself and not a word out of him, he thinking then somehow that your heart is sealed against him and that 'twill never change . . .

EDMUND. I' faith, Luke, and how did you guess . . .

LUKE (*taking her hand*). You'd see him prowling along by the ditches, his head under him and he sighing. And he does be fit to weep itself when he gazes towards Croughderg and no sight of it at all through the drizzle falling on the low bogs. There's no mercy in Julia Shea's heart for him, and 'tis then he rightly knows it.

JULIA. But Edmund himself must know the way I am, and that there is no happiness in the wide world I wouldn't wish him. It's an unfortunate world, God forgive me ! I will go and sit down now, Mr. Quilter.

[*Trying to take her hand out of his.*

LUKE (*points*). Look out the window, Julia Shea ! Look at he on the bush !

JULIA. It's nothing at all I see but a small little bird.

LUKE. A robineen ; one of the robineens that do be singing to Edmund above in Cornamona. It's to follow us all the way he did, and he hopping from bush to bush. " You'll have luck to-day, Edmund Normyle," says he ; " you'll have luck to-day." How sedate he is in himself now, an' he decking his little red breast.

JULIA. The creature he does look a stranger. (*Sees LUKE smile.*) I will go now. What'll I do at all ? Let go my hand,

Mr. Quilter. (*She disengages her hand and goes towards dresser.*) What will I do? what will I do? (*Pause.*) It's my promise I gave, and I said I'd be true to Pats Connor.

LUKE. I'll engage there'll be no hindrance to you in a week or ten days' time when this boy will have hooked away for himself. (*JULIA starts and turns.*) If you said I'll have him, he's so mad on you, he'd hardly go over the seas, I'm thinking.

JULIA (*excitedly*). What, 'tisn't to America he's going at all?

LUKE. Oh, it's no blame on you over it, my dear girl. 'Tisn't you drove him to it, for he hadn't the money to be drove to it desperate as you had him itself. To-day week a card came from his Uncle Tim, and Edmund will be sailing of a Tuesday. (*Takes out card out of his pocket and flourishes it.*) You might as well be saying good-bye to one another now, as 'tis hardly you'll meet again in this world, I'm thinking.

[*JULIA puts out her hand for card; LUKE draws it back.*

JULIA. Why are you keeping the card from me if it is Edmund's it is?

LUKE. Psh! The card is all right, never you fear.

[*Puts it in pocket.*

JULIA (*catches EDMUND by arm*). Edmund, is this the truth? You to keep it dark from me and you here a Friday?

[*Pause.*

EDMUND (*rises*). God knows, Luke, I can't get it from me to tell her a lie. The card is Michael Mulcair's he has, Julia. Luke, don't be wild.

JULIA. 'Tisn't he should be wild at all, but she that he has played his tricks on. Why, then, it's one word of the truth has more power with me than fifty of his tricks; and if

18 The Country Dressmaker

poor Pats don't return in the meantime, and you'll wait a year and a day, I won't give you the refuse then, Edmund Normyle.

EDMUND. It's longer than that I'd wait, Julia, if it was your wish and you fixed it.

MATT (*rises*). Ptse ! A year and a day. This is more of the novelette. Let it be finished now, one way or another. It's sick entirely I am of this business.

LUKE. Don't be pressing her against her will, now, or 'tis stomached she'll get and she a well-learned woman. Leave it to her sense of what's dutiful and good, Matt Dillane. (*EDMUND sits on table ; MATT laughs ironically.*) And let her have a little time to be screwing herself to it. Come, we'll make a bargain on the head of it. Let it be three months, and that's neither too long nor too short.

NORRY. Do, Julia. Be said by Mr. Quilter, and he for your good.

LUKE. There's a cousin of Peg M'Assy's in Pittsburg and he must know Pats Connor surely. I'll make it my business to write to him to find out the way Pats Connor is, whether he is in poverty or bad health, or whether he ever intends to come home to you at all. It's my belief he has no notion of you, but if he has there will be no blame on you if you wait for him for ten years more itself.

JULIA. If I wrote to Pats myself ! But I could never do that at all. I'm thinking you'll find out what you want to find out, Mr. Quilter. But let it be three months. I can't be going against the whole world, and it's conquered I am. I'll go now and take this parcel to the Clothesys. (*Sighs, goes to dresser.*) 'Tisn't going there often I'll be in the future, I'm thinking.

LUKE. 'Tis with you we will be and the Clothesys on our way home. (*To EDMUND.*) Will you get off that table, sir,

and accompany the woman you're contracted to. (*EDMUND comes off.*) It's a good distance I'll be keeping behind them and having a smoke for myself, Norry Shea. Lovers' company is no company for a thrice-married man and his day long gone by. I'd as lief be peeping at a pair of hens now, and they pretending to be listening to one another and telling each other the most important things in the world.

[*Whistling heard outside.*]

JULIA. That hornpipe was always Pats' fancy. 'Twas wonderful the turns and thrills he had for it. No one in the wide world could whistle it like Pats Connor. 'Twas a grand thing entirely to hear him on a frosty morning and he whistling "The Stack of Barley," and he walking up the frosty fields. (*Pause.*) But those times are gone for evermore. (*To EDMUND, taking up parcel.*) We'll be going now.

[*Goes out, followed by EDMUND.*]

LUKE. It's great power there do be in music, even in a whistle itself. Look at the change it made in her colour and the way it upset her. Well, Norry Shea, as the book says, "All's well that ends well in the heel."

NORRY. It's light the heart is in me now, and it is grateful I am to you, Mr. Quilter. 'Twasn't your fault that the case did not turn out the way you wanted it.

LUKE. My dear woman, you don't know me. It turned out the very way I expected it itself. I had Edmund tutored to back me up in the lie, but he being soft and simple 'twas well I knew his conscience would prick him and that he'd say just what I wanted him to say to soften her. If I tutored him to say it, it's a blunder he'd make of it and it's ruined entirely he'd be. Well, God bless ye both !

NORRY. God bless you likewise, Mr. Quilter, and God spare you long !

[*LUKE goes out.*]

MATT. I give in he's a knacky man in the line of women.

20 The Country Dressmaker

The day's spent on me with this match-making, Norry Shea. [MIN comes in.]

MIN. Norry Shea, it's Pats Connor that's coming home. 'Twas like a Yank itself I saw passing here a while ago, and he going towards the cabin you were turned out of five years ago.

NORRY. 'Twas his whistle she heard, and how well she knew it! It's undone we are entirely. Let Pats Connor be what he is, if Julia gets one splink of him, she'll never again look back on Edmund Normyle. [Sits on sugar chair.]

MATT (*going to door*). Well, there is no use in talking. What is to be will be, Norry Shea. [MIN goes out.]

NORRY. 'Tis true, 'tis true, Matt Dillane, what is to be will be; what is to be will be.

CURTAIN.

ACT II

SCENE.—*Interior of MICHAEL CLOHESY's kitchen. Entrance door at right. Yard door left. Large deal table in centre of room. Large dresser well filled with various crockery. Can near dresser. At right of entrance door some hayforks and a rake are standing upright. Fireplace opposite dresser. Above fireplace door leading to a bedroom.* MICHAEL enters with a telegram in his hand.

MICHAEL (*calls*). Maryanne ! Is it above in the room you are, Maryanne ?

MARYANNE (*coming out of room*). It is up in the room I am, Michael.

MICHAEL. A telegram that's come from Pats Connor from Cork. The post-boy gave it to me and I going to town. It would be a horrid thing if he came by the four o'clock and no car to meet him. With the foherough that was in me back to the meadow—bad luck to it !—I never thought of it, Maryanne.

MARYANNE. He'd never know of that train and it only on a year. It's only special people do be travelling by it, I'm thinking. Sure it's by the nine o'clock the home-comers ever and always arrive. And put that frown away from you, Michael. I never heard tell of a human being to come by the four o'clock on a holiday from Dublin, or returning from America, or from any other place in the wide world.

MICHAEL. That will do, and don't be making a speech on

22 The Country Dressmaker

the head of it. Whist ! What clattering is that I hear going on in the room ?

MARYANNE. That's Babe finishing her tea. Herself and Ellie are as bitter as ever with the jealousy of one another as to which is to have Pats Connor.

MICHAEL (*loudly*). Is this the way my commands are being respected by a pair of hussies ? I'll warrant 'tis one or either of them will have a mark if it's much more of this cat-fighting I hear going on between them. Let them take good heed of the arrangement to behave like a pair of sweet, smiling dolls for themselves, and let the Yank have whichever matches his fancy.

MARYANNE. It's a wonderful chance that has come to us entirely, Michael, and here they are ready to be scrooging the eyes out of one another if you weren't coming all day and parsing between them.

MICHAEL. It's a God-send it is in sure, woman, and the way we are—a big mortgage on the farm and another debt of two hundred pounds hanging over us because of that bad spec I made in the building of the creamery. It's settled we'd be if Pats Connor has the money we think, and we succeed between us all—and he having no knowledge of land—by getting the big money from him with the mountainy farm and one of the girls. And whatever would remain over after stocking the farm would likely pay off the debt. Then the fortune our Jack would bring into this farm would clear the mortgage. And the other girl to assist in the shop with her Aunt Peg, and take her chance of getting some scrapings in the heel. (*Loudly.*) Let them take good heed of the arrangement.

MARYANNE. A wonamum they'd both have to go to work, Michael, if this chance didn't come their way.

MICHAEL. If they misconduct themselves before Pats

Connor, they'll get the cost for the road, and off they go out of this.

[BABE comes down from room.]

BABE. Father, 'tisn't a word I'll be saying to Ellie opposite Pats, I promise you, if she don't begin it herself. But I'm thinking if it was a right view you took of the matter, you'd know that one good chance is worth twenty bad ones. When Julia Shea and Pats Connor meet, and he'll learn of the trick we played on her, he'll never look back on us. But as 'twas Ellie kept it up, let her have the blame on herself, and let us tell him of it and not be ruining the both of us.

MARYANNE. Stop, girl ! Don't you see your father reddening and the man near his temper ?

MICHAEL. If I hear another word of this ! Have I to tell you again that Pats Connor and the hungry dressmaker will never come face to face till he's married to which or whether of you it matches him ?

BABE. Father, it was only making a remark I was in a fair way.

MARYANNE (*pushing BABE before her to door*). Out in the meadow with you and be making up the grass-cocks ! Get out at once, you mopsey !

[*Shoves her out of yard door, and bangs door after her.*

MICHAEL. Come hither. I want to tell you about how I got on. We all met in the snug in Peg's public-house—the four brothers and the three sisters. (*Speaking in a low tone.*) I didn't say at first that we were on for trapping Pats Connor and his dollars. I mentioned I wanted a little favour. I said it wasn't much or I wouldn't be troubling them. I had a little doubt, not being too well off and knowing the way of the world, that they mightn't be too limber or willing in themselves, in spite of all our standing by each other. Do you mind ?

24 The Country Dressmaker

MARYANNE. I do, Michael.

MICHAEL. So, before they spoke whether or no, I began with Tim, and reminded him of the time myself and James—um—um—kept him from being boycotted, after he taking the evicted—um—um—farm. How we kept the other man in tow till he gave his goodwill for—um—um—a song, and we—um—um—persuaded him to go to America in the heel. Do you mind?

MARYANNE. I do, Michael avico.

MICHAEL. And then I reminded Peg how myself and Luke coogled the publican into—um—um—marrying her, he thinking she had a fortune and—um—um—she not having a halfpenny. Do you mind?

MARYANNE. I do, Michael agrah.

MICHAEL. I come at Luke then. I reminded him of the time he was a tenant on the eleven months' system. How I managed the landlord for him and I—um—um—great chums with Mr. Hobson the agent for—um—um—paying my rent—um—um—unknown to the other tenants, the time of the—um—um—Plan of Campaign. Then I spoke to James himself, how I helped to smooth matters for him the time he—um—um—grabbed Mullarkey's land, and grabbers shot down like crows to each side of him. (*Comes round and sits on chair.*) I didn't forget Ellen, nor Jane how I saved her, and it proved that she—um—um—picked Larkin's pocket and he—um—um—drunk coming from the Fair. Do you understand?

MARYANNE. I do, Michael.

MICHAEL. We are a great family, Maryanne. "What are you talking about," said they all, "or is it to think that we'd renague you in the heel?"

MARYANNE. I wouldn't doubt the Clohesys.

MICHAEL. I told them I was a bit shy in myself, being the eldest of the Clohesys that had most at the start but least in

the heel of the hunt, though strangers didn't know that. Then I told them about the Yank and all to that, and how I wanted to bring him here and there among them and they big people, J.P.'s, District Councillors, Publicans, and so forth, till it would get stuck in him how fine and wealthy they were, and he'd never suspect me being dragged, him they all to be palavering of course. They all agreed in one yell. That was all I asked at first. Do you mind?

MARYANNE. Ay, Michael.

MICHAEL. Then came the chief point. That he'd have to get lashings of drink wherever he'd go till he was bothered. (*Pause.*) I showed them the telegram, twelve words for sixpence, and just twelve in it—"You see he has an eye for the halfpence," said I to them, Maryanne.

MARYANNE. I . . . see.

MICHAEL. "That's a bad sign," said Luke, "for maybe the man don't drink if he's such a hag." "There never was a Yank," said I, "that wouldn't drink the ocean dry if he got it for nothing. Pour it down his throat," said I, "and I'll pay for as much as I can of it as we go along, unknown to him." "You won't pay as much as one farthing," said they all, "till you have him nabbed as round as a hook."

MARYANNE. The finest people in the world are the Clothesys.

MICHAEL. And Peg herself spoke manly enough. "Bring him to me, Michael," says she. "Bring him for six months if you like," says she, "and I'll warrant he won't go to bed sober a night in the week." We are great people; we are smart people, Maryanne.

MARYANNE. And smartness was never more wanting than now, Michael. The people are not half so simple as they were the time before the agitation.

MICHAEL. Psh! 'Twill take a few generations more of the mean things that are now rising to ketch up with the

26 The Country Dressmaker

intellects of the Clothesys. (*Rises.*) Well, it's a great ease to have that part of the business settled. Whisper—but don't have a word of this . . .

MARYANNE. Mum, Maryanne is enough.

MICHAEL. Pats Connor married a strange woman. It's entrapped he got by her and he but a couple of years over. It's a German woman he married.

MARYANNE. Michael ! Michael ! Oh, my heart, Michael !

MICHAEL. Don't be screeching at the top of your voice, woman. 'Twas as a secret I got it from one Tomaus Brack of Meenscubawn that's just come home from America, and we in Peg's snug last night. The German woman was no great things in any way you'd take her, Maryanne. But it was a queer thing itself happened to her in the heel. (*Scratches head.*) Wait, now—to tell the truth it's half-bloused I was, and Tomaus telling it to me in the snug.

MARYANNE. There's never a time you go into that snug that you don't get half-bloused, Michael.

MICHAEL. I hadn't a deal taken then, about eight pints and a bottle. Ah, here's what occurred to her. She ate too much of them sausages, she drank too much of that beer, she sat in the chair for herself opposite the fire—she dozed, she woke up, and she kicked.

MARYANNE. Kicked ?

MICHAEL. As stiff as a bar of iron.

MARYANNE. Oh, well, if she's dead !

MICHAEL. Let no one hereabouts get a hint of it, but it's up with the break of day you must be, and away with you on the horse and car to Meenscubawn. You couldn't be too cautious in dealing with Yanks, woman. It's twenty times that man might be married for himself since, unbeknownst. Tomaus must know, and the sister would pick it out of him if you could come around her at all.

MARYANNE. My hand to you, 'tisn't wanting for soft talk she'll be if I can work her.

MICHAEL. Take a good quart of special with you and you passing Peg's.

MARYANNE. A pint wouldn't be a bad thing, Michael.

MICHAEL. You'd lose a cow for the price of a paper of salts ! Get a quart. And it's a few little trumperies you might buy also for the sister's child. A thing like that would melt her in a hop.

MARYANNE. I'll take a bugle and a rattler. That's what I'll take.

MICHAEL. That will do. Let us out to the meadow now. All the help will be wanted to rise that streak of hay this evening. (*MARYANNE rises. MICHAEL searches pockets.*) Where in the world did I put that pipe ?

[Takes papers out of pocket and flings them on table, then crosses to fire, feels on mantelpiece.]

MARYANNE. I was going to take out this tin can of sour milk to the men, but sure if they ask for it Babe or Ellie can come for it.

[Goes towards yard door, turns and sees papers on table.]

MICHAEL. That's a show where that pipe is gone to. Oh, it's here. I have it. (*Takes it out of waistcoat pocket and lights it. Crosses and takes rake from behind door.*) A tooth out of the rake ! A man can't put his foot outside the door but there'll be harm done in him ! Which of you did it and how did you do it ? You do be half mad, you women, when you're put about. You can't keep but the one thought in the head at the time. (*MARYANNE goes out; he shouts.*) I'll engage it's one of you hit the sow with it, and if you're bent on hitting the sow you'd fling a gold watch as ready as you'd fling a rake.

28 The Country Dressmaker

[Exit yard door, slamming it. Pause. PATS CONNOR and BABE appear at doorway.

BABE (*speaking outside*). Cush ! cush ! Ah, bother to ye for hens and ye fed half an hour since itself. I'll pull the heads off ye, and the temper I'm in after they sending me for the milk. (*Coming in.*) And Ellie half idle and she raking around the clours for herself. [Sees PATS ; stands.

PATS. Miss Clohesy, I presume.

BABE. Ah, 'tisn't Pats Connor at all, and look at the cut of me in my old clothes. Welcome, welcome ! (*Shakes hands.*) Isn't it well it was myself after all and not old Ellie they sent for the milk. You can't say whatever but 'twas I was the first to bid you welcome. In one look I knew you, Pats, by the suit of clothes and the gold watch and chain. I'm Babe ; it's distracted they'll be entirely to hear you came by the wrong train with no one before you, and you going to the expense itself, maybe, of hiring a side-car all the ways here.

PATS. Guess I hired no side-car, could see no side-car, and just took a fancy for a tramp like over these rural fields hithermost. Left baggage at railway depot yonder. Turned right into Mollarkey's saloon. Why, they didn't know what was a cocktail ! They retail beastly black stuff. Ugh !

BABE. 'Twas a pity you didn't make your way to Aunt Peg's. Aunt Peg's is noted all over the globe. Oh, that milk, bad seconds to it, Pats ; it's back in the meadow I'll have to be taking it to the men. I'll hang the kettle first. (*Goes to fire and hangs kettle.*) Pats, when I give the word that you're returned it's trampling each other to death they'll be, father and mother and Jack and Ellie, to see who'll be foremost to welcome you home !

PATS. I reckon I'll be real glad to have a shake with them all. Your mother is the only connection I have hereabouts,

The Country Dressmaker 29

Babe Clohesy, and I'll just weather it a while in this here rising ground. Rather strange, Babe, that I am fixed to settle down in the finish as a farmer. Guess they have caught me likewise, those old fields and valleys and rivers. (*Sentimentally.*) 'Twas little I thought it. How I used to scorn the softheads who scraped and starved, all to come back, to come back !

BABE (*slyly, smiling*). Maybe 'tis more than the fields and rivers were calling to you to come back, to come back, Pats, over the ocean wave !

PATS (*musingly*). Ah, there are changes since I last camped in this here neighbourhood ten years ago ! Those poor Sheas ! There ain't no trace of that cabin of theirs where it stood in the elders outside Matt Dillane's bounds ditch in Tim Fogarty's farm.

BABE. Wisha, the poor things were evicted. Julia Shea is a blouse-stitcher now itself.

PATS. Daresay Julia is spliced with half a dozen bawling slobbery youngsters. I call to mind that boy-and-girl affair between myself and Julia. I reckon she got cured more quickly than I did. (*Sighing.*) They all do.

BABE (*archly*). Take care. Maybe 'tisn't cured she is yet. Take care if the dressmaker isn't sticking to you still, Pats Connor.

PATS. That ain't likely after ten years.

BABE (*coming close to him*). She is, Pats, surely.

PATS. Well, I'm skeered. After my experience in the States, this is the greatest surprise that could come to me that there was a woman living so steadfast as to wait ten years for a man and he thousands of miles away.

BABE. 'Twas Ellie did it with her planning. There's no being up to Ellie once she takes the fit. But she never made tapes till she gave under playing this wonderful trick on Julia Shea.

30 The Country Dressmaker

PATS. What was that, Babe Clohesy ?

BABE (*with excitement and delight*). 'Twas the cleverest thing, but 'twasn't right at all. 'Tis crawtha you might be with poor Ellie if I told it, and it's a show she'd be making of me. She's elder than me by four and a half years, Pats, and it's a little bitter she's turning in herself. Father and mother would be worse itself. It slipped from me that I'd be having some sport with you over it, and whist ! they lepped and hopped . . .

PATS (*catching her hands*). Come, Babe, you just tell me this great story right away. I guarantee I'll be mum. You just bet I will. Rather.

BABE. Whisper. It's to persuade Julia Shea, the dressmaker, she did, that your whole study in America was to make a pile for her, make a pile so you'd be able to come home and marry a dressmaker. (*Laughs.*)

PATS (*harshly*). Ellie told her that ? And did she believe it ?

BABE. Didn't I know 'twas wild you'd be with Ellie, and 'tis mad with myself I am to let you pick it out of me at all, at all, Pats. It was a letter every Christmas for these eight years back she would read out to Julia, with a different story every time, and no letter at all to come from you since the time you sent your likenesses long ago. And 'twas one of the likenesses she gave Julia itself, Pats, pretending you sent it to her special.

PATS. Well, I guess the dressmaker ain't got her head fixed on the right place, Babe Clohesy.

BABE. That's how Ellie did it. The heads do be always going by them dressmakers, Pats. Julia would be sitting at the fire in a half dream, and Ellie reading away in the corner. The poor dressmaker asked to see a letter once, but catch Ellie letting her have a peep at it and it her own make-up,

The Country Dressmaker 31

Ellie pretending to be jealous of any one touching the letters but herself and they all coming to her, by the way. 'Twasn't a lucky thing to be doing, Pats, I'm thinking, for, but for Ellie, the poor old dressmaker would have got a boy of her own class—Edmund Normyle—and the man twice too good for an old scregeen of a dressmaker.

PATS. Reckon 'twas real smart and no mistake. You just haul Ellie here to me right away. Guess I should like a good talk with a girl like that.

BABE (*in distress*). Pats ! And 'tisn't wild with her you are at all, then ?

PATS. You just bet I ain't nohow. What a real grand girl ! I guess she'll weather it through the world. Why, she'd travel first class even in the United States of America.

BABE. But she'd never have the brain to think of it herself, Pats.

PATS. Ah !

BABE. She's the best in the world for playing tricks, but she'd never invent one for herself. 'Twas I thought of it, though Ellie might deny it in me now itself.

PATS. Ah, my sharp Babe. I reckon you ain't no green-horn. I say, you have got the head screwed right there. You have the brain. You are fifty per cent ahead of Ellie, but you just keep that to yourself. Guess you twig ?

BABE (*in pleasant surprise with a burst of laughter. Very loudly*). Uggay ! 'Tisn't getting myself murdered entirely I'd be and to tell her that. (*Goes and takes up can.*) Oh, the milk and the meadow ! What will become of me ? It's crucified I'll be by them all as I didn't break my shins running to tell them you're back. (*Takes up letter.*) Ah, if it isn't your own letter to my father itself that's here. (*Gives it to him, archly.*) Maybe I know what's in it, Pats, about father looking out for a strong farmer's daughter for you.

32 The Country Dressmaker

[Laughs ; runs out yard door. PATS flings letter into fire, sits by fire, whistles hornpipe. JULIA, with parcel, appears at door with MIN.

JULIA. It must be Jack Clothesy that's whistling, Min. It's a judgment on me surely the day that's in it to be having my heart saddened by hearing that hornpipe whistled twice itself. 'Twas never before I heard that thrill in it but from Pats Connor.

MIN. It isn't Jack Clothesy. It's Pats Connor.

JULIA. So changed, so changed ! When Sir Geoffrey came back there was no change in him but the grey hair on his temples. Can that be Pats ?

MIN. He's a proper Yank, right enough. Look at him combing his hair, screwing up his pus to the looking-glass—you're in love with him, but I'd nearly get a fit of croosting him with stones.

JULIA. He sees us. [MIN shuts JULIA inside door.

PATS. Julia Shea ! Well, Julia, it's that pile I have made at last, and here I am the same as ever. (*Advances.*) I have come back to you, Julia Shea—but is there no smile of welcome for me after all these years ?

JULIA. 'Tis so sudden, Pats. And . . . I hardly knew you . . . and doubting lately if you were to come home at all.

PATS. So those Clothesys left you dull of it ? (*Takes her hands.*) You doubted me, Julia ! But, Julia, don't think I blame you for doubting me. Who is to blame but the man who stands before you, who tested you almost beyond the strength of any woman ?

JULIA. Ah, it's the weakest woman in the world I am. And, Pats, let me go—I'm not suitable for you now. You'll get some one a thousand times better to share your pile.

PATS. I guess not, Julia, but your dear Irish bashfulness

The Country Dressmaker 33

only makes you ten times more charming. But we haven't kissed yet. Julia, my darling future wife, kiss me.

[*He kisses her. EDMUND NORMYLE puts his head in over half-door.*

EDMUND. Julia !

PATS. Julia, I reckon this is the joyfullest day that has come into both our lives. Isn't it, Julia ?

EDMUND. Julia !

JULIA. Yes, Pats. [PATS *embraces her again.*

EDMUND. Julia ! Oh, he must be the Yank. She don't know I'm in the world at all now.

MIN (*giggling, to EDMUND*). She hardly knows where she is herself at all, and the fix she's now in, I'm thinking. Well, I'll skelp home, and do you go too.

[*They go out ; EDMUND looks in window passing.*

PATS. Here are the Clothesys. It's away we'll go as soon as we can do it polite, for it's a kind of a dislike I have taken to these Clothesys.

[MICHAEL, MARYANNE, BABE, ELLIE and JACK *come in.*

MICHAEL (*shaking hands with PATS*). Let me shake that hand of yours, Pats, my son, and say welcome home ! Maryanne, Ellie, Jack, welcome him do you in one breath ! Is there a tongue in ye, or is it struck dumb with the joy of seeing Pats Connor among ye all again ye are ?

ELLIE and JACK (*shaking hands*). Welcome to you, indeed, Pats Connor !

MARYANNE (*shaking hands*). 'Tis well you know, my dear child, there isn't need for me to say a word at all. Don't my two eyes show it, with the pleasure from my heart's core bursting through them ? Aren't you one of my own ? My grandfather and your great-grandmother were second and third cousins, Pats Connor. The flowers of May or a shower

34 The Country Dressmaker

after the longest drought that ever came on the land isn't to be compared with the welcome we have for you, Pats Connor !

MICHAEL. Amen, then.

BABE *and* ELLIE. Amen likewise.

MICHAEL. Jack ! Jack !

JACK. Didn't I say my welcome to him and didn't he hear me ?

PATS. I reckon it's proud I am of the reception I have got in this house. I guess it's good friends we'll be always, friends, neighbours, and connections. But it's real bad to be taking you from your work this fine hour of the day.

MICHAEL. Ah, don't have a word of that at all, man. Let us be having refreshment . . .

PATS. I guess I won't be disturbing you now. You'll just excuse me for the present, Michael, like a good man, and you likewise, Maryanne, as I have to accompany Julia Shea down the fields ; it's a real important message I have to deliver to her mother. I guarantee we'll find many opportunities of meeting each other and enjoying each other's society.

MICHAEL (*at dresser*). What is this, or is it my ears that are gone mad entirely ? Ah, it's one of your pranks you are playing on us. You come to your friends on a visit, you a respectable man, and in the turn of a hand away you hop with a hungry dressmaker ! Nonsense, Mr. O'Connor, 'tisn't in you to do the like. Sit down. I'll warrant you won't leave my house to-day, if it was for the sake of doing the polite by all the dressmakers in Europe !

MARYANNE (*puts apron to her eye*). One of my own, the first day home with him and all, to give it to say he'd think more of a strange person than he would of his

The Country Dressmaker 35

relations ! What wrong did we do in you, Pats Connor, or has that villainous girl there come and belied us all to you ?

PATS. I reckon, Maryanne, 'twasn't of you or of yours she was speaking. Maryanne Clothesy, dear friend, I'm sure you won't be angered at my going with Julia, when I tell you it's in a real soon time we are to get spliced.

MICHAEL (*rushes to table and fumbles among papers*). Where's that letter the villain sent us for a humbug ? It's gone ! It's the robber himself that has picked it !

MARYANNE. Will you control your temper, Michael (*throws him on settle*), and don't be making a show now (*soothering*) ? It's only a sudden fancy he has taken, and don't make the case worse. (*Turns to PATS.*) Pats Connor, stay with us to-night itself, then go down to that poor dressmaker when it matches you, and I assure you it's no obstacle we'll be putting in your way.

JACK. Let the man go where he likes and what keeping have we in him.

MICHAEL (*to JACK*). Don't be putting in your word. Out of this and away to the meadow with you, this minute !

[*Pushes him out.*

MARYANNE. Pats, don't mind that omadaun, Jack. He's taken after the Hayeses and is ignorant and brusque in himself. [Enter LUKE QUILTER.

LUKE. Julia Shea, what have you done on that poor quiet boy, Edmund Normyle ? He's going like a madman down the road, kicking rocks out before him and lepping. (*Sees PATS.*) Ptse ! Fawnorit ! (*Aside.*) The Yank !

MARYANNE. Take her away with you, Mr. Quilter. 'Tisn't we are keeping her from Edmund Normyle, I warrant you. Indeed, it's long enough the pair of them were going together and the people talking.

36 The Country Dressmaker

LUKE. Mrs. Clohesy, my dear woman, now I beg your pardon. There was never a whisper about her character.

MICHAEL. Leave my house, you mountainy snawee ! Leave it, I say !

PATS. Well, I guess it's not the stranger that will take away Julia Shea however, but the man that's going to be her husband.

LUKE. And it's a graceful wife you'll have in Julia Shea, Mr. O'Connor. I say that, though she has scorned Edmund itself. There's a deal of fear of him. I have a cure for him above in Cornamona in the person and property of Bridget Gildea.

[Goes out.]

PATS. I reckon we'll be going on, Julia.

MARYANNE. Pats, come back ! Will you come back, Pats ! (*Weeps.*) Stay for an hour, stay for a half an hour, stay for ten minutes itself.

JULIA (*earnestly*). Pats, do stay with them, I'd rather you would.

PATS. Good-evening, Maryanne, good-evening to you all.

[Exit.]

MICHAEL (*rushes out*). Come back, and here's the hand, Pats, here's the hand !

PATS. We'll meet again, Michael. We'll meet often, I reckon, often.

MICHAEL (*rushing in*). There's hundreds of pounds gone skeeting down the road with a screed of a dressmaker !

MARYANNE. The temper is on him, and come up in the room. Let him get into his fit and let him get out of it.

[MARYANNE, BABE and ELLIE go into room.]

MICHAEL (*throwing himself on chair and banging table with fist*). The devil, I say, the devil ! (*Pause.*) Come down ; it's out of it again I am.

[MARYANNE, BABE and ELLIE come out of room.]

The Country Dressmaker 37

MARYANNE. Have hope, Michael, and don't be giving way to your temper. He's not gone from us till he's married to her.

MICHAEL. Ah, but this is a terrible disappointment to me entirely, Maryanne. But it's a strive we'll make to get him back. We must all do our best. (*Turning round and shaking his fist after PATS.*) If we could only get him once again into the clutches of the Clothesys.

[*Exeunt MICHAEL, MARYANNE and ELLIE.*

BABE. It's some harm I did, I'm thinking, by what I told him. But how could I help it at all with the cute old withered sham of a Yank and the way he pretended to be enjoying it.

[*Goes out.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE.—*Same as in Act I. When curtain rises MATT DILLANE puts his head in over half-door from right.*

MATT (*comes in*). Where's that mountainy man ? (*Calls.*) Norry Shea ! Norry Shea ! (*NORRY and JULIA come out of room.*) Was there any trace of that prevaricator, Luke Quilter, here ?

NORRY. The decent friendly man. Not a splink of him did I see since the day yourself and himself and Pats Connor were arguing there on the hearth, Matt Dillane.

MATT. He is decent ! He hasn't the word of a tinker ! No wonder I'd be mad with the man. A half an hour gone we were to meet at the top of the crough after he getting his new body-coat from the tailor, and he was to call in here first. We had it settled and all, Norry Shea, to go to the village before we'd join the drag at the height of the road, and Edmund Normyle getting married at Finuig at two o'clock sharp. Isn't Luke Quilter a notorious liar itself ?

JULIA. Edmund Normyle getting married at two o'clock ?

MATT (*drily*). Yes, at two o'clock. (*Sees LUKE.*) Ah, it's in good time you are, I see.

LUKE (*entering*). Blame the tailor, Mr. Dillane. He knew the foherough I was in and sewed a couple of buttons crookedy from pure spite. My respects to you, Norry Shea. 'Tisn't

for this wedding that I got the new clothes for at all, but for to-morrow, when herself and Pats Connor will be going to the chapel.

MATT. Are we to go or are we to go at all ?

LUKE (*going to fire*). Give me time to light the pipe itself. You're the lucky woman, Julia Shea, after all you've put of you.

JULIA. It's lucky I am indeed, Mr. Quilter.

LUKE. Tut, you're the happiest woman in the world itself. Though that don't contradict what I said about Yanks, but Pats Connor being different from the great majority of them. (*JULIA goes into room.*) Isn't he a fine class of a man, Norry Shea ?

NORRY (*crossing and taking up cleave*). From my heart I say it, then. He is a great man surely. You'll excuse me, Mr. Quilter, to be going out for the turf. It's busy entirely we are, as Pats would have the wedding nowhere but here out of a compliment to me. [Goes out.

LUKE. Whisper. Have the reports of his conduct in Pittsburg come to the ears of Norry Shea yet ?

MATT. Put the question to her yourself, Luke Quilter. It's glib enough the tongue is by you, I'm thinking.

[*Going, LUKE stops him.*

LUKE. Listen to me. Sure all the world has it for over a fortnight of Pats Connor's canter in Pittsburg, and of what the Clothesys did to Julia, with treble added to the story, and they going from mouth to mouth. They must have got some hint of it here and women coming in to them.

MATT. As I said to you the day of the market, I know no more than the dead what knowledge of it Norry Shea has, and indeed when she didn't speak of it to us . . .

LUKE. Pshough ! I don't know what to make of you Dillanes at all. I'll engage if I had recourse to this house

40 The Country Dressmaker

'tisn't long I'd remain dull of what was in her mind, let her be twice as reserved itself.

MATT. I have no blame on her to be reserved in herself. If it came to his ears that they were giving heed to the stories of him, he mightn't take it too well, Luke Quilter.

LUKE. If that's her point, there's great credit due to her for keeping such a hold of her tongue.

MATT. Let us be going on now. We can smoke in the fresh air on top of the road-ditch till the drag comes to us.

[*They go out. NORRY comes in and empties cleave of turf in corner. JULIA comes down from room.*

JULIA (*sitting down at fire*). Luke Quilter said I was happy. (*Laughs.*) I am happy, he was saying.

NORRY. Happy ! Isn't it nearly out of your mind with happiness you should be, and you marrying the man of your heart's love in twenty-four hours ? I know, for a mother sees all, that a little trouble has come on your mind for the last couple of days. It's a thing of nothing, a change that comes over all of us when we do be overjoyed in ourselves, like a nip of frost that would come of a summer's evening, and no trace of it with the dawn of the day.

JULIA. It won't rise off my heart like that at all. It's a black frost that has come on my heart, I'm thinking.

NORRY. How could that be in the turn of a hand ? It's some silly thing, I'll engage, and in a soon time you'll be laughing to yourself at the way you're brooding over it so severely.

JULIA. Wherefore should I be keeping it from you any longer ? (*Rises.*) I know what is to be known about Pats Connor, and what isn't to be known is in his own conscience, God forgive him, and God help me !

NORRY. Oh, my, God help me ! Who got a vacancy to

whisper them reports in your ears after all the trouble I had making signs to the story-tellers, and they coming in here full of their newses ?

JULIA. From Kate Broder I heard it all the time you and me were separated at the big Fair. Long before I got hint of it, tight as you watched me itself. But my pride and obstinacy wouldn't let me give in Pats Connor was not what I thought him all these years. (*Going to window and looking out.*) It's a queer woman I was to be thinking of him for ten years, morning, noon, and night. It's a terrible thing that I have done. It's for this man that I scorned the heart that cherished me.

NORRY. My child, your future is settled now, and do be contented. Isn't it a good man Pats Connor is, and all he has done for us up to the present itself ? He has filled the chest with tea, he has brought the sugar, the meal, and the flour into the house for us, and 'tisn't in want of a skimmin' of butter we are since Pats Connor came home.

JULIA. What signify is his share of groceries to me ? Isn't it to make all things smooth for himself he wants with his generosity ? It don't make him any the better in my eyes now what he does or what he doesn't do.

NORRY. Oh, wisha, my child, don't be letting these wild thoughts get the better of you. There'sn't a farmer's daughter going into the town of Lyre but is sinning in her heart with the dint of envying you and your good fortune. You, a poor girl ! You can toss your head soon for yourself, and you going the high road in your horse and car when Pats buys the Halpin's farm and has built the slate house on it.

JULIA. What's farms and horses to a mind gone distracted ? It's happier I'd be on a potato and salt with the honest heart I scorned.

NORRY. Pats will buy me an arm-chair, he said, and I can sit

42 The Country Dressmaker

at the fire and do my knitting and sewing at my ease—that's when we are all living together in the slate house. The fear of the Workhouse will never again come before my old eyes. He'll buy the best of stuff for me likewise, and I'll go make a new brown habit for myself to lay me out in when I'm dead, for he don't think this one I'm making is respectable enough. He'll give me a decent burying too, and he needn't be ashamed of me, one of the Driscolls of Knockanasieg.

JULIA. It's the bad treatment I gave Edmund after all his love and devotion to me. A Friday he came here looking at me, to see if I was happy, and he knowing the reports that were going around. A harsh look and a short word were his thanks, for the pride and bitterness were strong in my heart. I told him to hurry and marry Bridget Gildea and not to be coming here any more, and it's to please me he's marrying her to-day.

NORRY. It's good and proper advice you gave him, Julia, and he'll be in the better of it with the help of God.

JULIA. A harsh look and a short word. He'll be marrying Bridget Gildea to-day, and it's nearly the time now for the drag to be coming up the high road and going on to Finuig. If I could meet him now it isn't a harsh look and a short word he would get from me. (*Takes shawl from crook on dresser.*) And I will go to the ditch of the road and I will speak to him and the drag passing by !

NORRY (*rushing and catching her*). Julia, you'll do no such thing. You won't go and put disgrace on me and on yourself in face of the parish. You won't go stopping a man and he on his way to meet the woman he's contracted to at the altar.

JULIA. I will speak to him that was friends with me so long and wish him joy, and there won't be any sin or shame in that.

NORRY. Oh, be said by me, and stay now for the love of the good God above in Heaven. [MIN enters.

JULIA. I will go to the ditch of the road and speak to Edmund Normyle, and don't be hindering me, for you can't stop me, I can tell you.

MIN (*catching JULIA*). Send a message. There's a gorsoon outside and I will give it to him for Edmund, whatever it is or whatever in the world you want to say to him at all.

JULIA. Where's the bit of paper and I'll write it ! (*Writes.*) There's no envelope to cover it, but that don't matter at all. Give it to the gorsoon and hurry, Min, for the drag is coming along by the lower road. [MIN goes out.

NORRY. Oh, isn't it a woeful thing to be preventing the man from getting married and he going to the altar ?

JULIA. 'Tisn't to prevent him from marrying I want, but we will part as we should have parted, good friends entirely.

NORRY. I don't know what it is you are at, or what you are after I don't know. You that were so modest in yourself, is it you above all the women in the wide world that would go bolder to work than even the females in on the flags of the bad cities. [MIN comes and stands at doorway.

MIN. Julia, you'll be made a scandal of ! There's a funeral of people on the road, wherever they rose out of, and it's in the middle of them the gorsoon is landed.

NORRY. Oh, wisha, wisha, wisha !

MIN. They are reading the writing, I'm thinking, for you'd hear a laugh coming with the wind.

NORRY. It's the price of her to be shamed after what she has done, Min Dillane.

MIN. It's my father and Luke itself that are walking up to the crowd.

JULIA. Let the people be going on and saying what they

44 The Country Dressmaker

like. It's nothing out of the way I have done to blush for.

[*Goes to window and looks out. MIN turns round.*

MIN. Whatever has cracked into their heads, my father and Luke haven't joined the drag at all, but are talking on the road for themselves. The gorsoon made a pass to give it, but I'm thinking it's my father that stopped him and gave him a slap in the ear likewise, for the gorsoon is racing down home now and he roaring.

JULIA. What right had your father to do that? I'll run up the fields. Where's my shawl? Let me go quickly.

[*Rushes towards door.*

MIN (*stopping her*). Don't mind it. The last car is gone like the wind over the height of Doon.

[*JULIA half falls against table.*

NORRY (*going to JULIA*). God help me with her! Julia, will you go and sit down on the chair itself. What would Pats Connor think of you now, and the way you are with that miserable look showing itself through your two eyes?

JULIA (*going and sitting at fire*). 'Twouldn't leave them now, mother, at the sight of Pats Connor at all, nor at the sound of his voice, I am thinking.

[*PATS CONNOR comes in quickly.*

PATS. Ladies, good-evening! I reckon I'm not as welcome as the right man, Mr. Edmund Normyle, would be, and it was a tragic thing that the message didn't reach him. But let Julia Shea lay no blame on that little gorsoon, who blubbered right out to me the injustice Matt Dillane did on him and I coming up the path. I reckon it's a martyr to duty he is. Well, it is a strange thing to see Pats Connor coming where he is not wanted. It is a strange thing, Norry Shea.

NORRY. It would be a far stranger thing then, Pats Connor, if you were not the most welcome person coming into this house. Don't be taking a wrong view of what

The Country Dressmaker 45

Julia has done. There was something she wanted to say to Edmund Normyle that she forgot to say to him and he here last, the time she persuaded him to marry Bridget Gildea ; and that was a good turn Julia did for her.

PATS. I daresay it was meant to be surely. Still I feel a kind of queer that Julia should send specially for this man and he on his way to the chapel to get spliced.

JULIA. It might be a queer thing, then, and the people might think it a queer thing likewise. But if it is itself, it's no apology I'll be making to you on the head of it, Pats Connor, you that never gave me a thought all the long years I was thinking of you. All is known to me, and 'tis better you should hear this from me now than hear it after.

PATS. I guess I sort of understand. In learning of these things a change has come in your affections like, and your preference is now for Edmund Normyle.

NORRY. Don't think it, Pats. 'Tisn't in the turn of the hand she could change from you, and she steadfast to you all the time since ye were loving childher under the one roof together. Don't be wild with her. It's distracted she is by them story-tellers. It's the like of her that has the greatest love that do be the easiest upset in themselves.

PATS. I reckon she has cancelled her love and prefers Edmund Normyle.

JULIA (*rising*). It is you that have blasted it with what you have done. You have deceived me since you came home itself. It's no hint you ever gave me that you were married to a German woman, Pats Connor !

PATS. I swear then to you, Julia Shea, that I would never have gone to the altar with you and leaving you dull of it. I guess I was a kind of screwing myself up to tell you, and that wasn't easy. You were to hear of it to-night.

46 The Country Dressmaker

JULIA. What are the people saying about other things you did, and that you never went to Mass or thought of going there ?

PATS. I reckon I am easy what the people are saying. You would have heard what you were entitled to hear and no less ; and if it was more information I was to give you, I guess it wouldn't be given because you were curious for it.

JULIA. It's only the dregs of a bad life you bring to me in the heel, Pats Connor. I have no more to say now, but God pity me, and the long foolish thoughts I was having of you !

PATS. Well, this ends the matter, and I reckon we can take a way each of our own now.

NORRY (*rising*). And is it going from us you are entirely ?

PATS. I guess it is, Norry Shea. You wouldn't keep me here to be reflected on by your daughter ?

NORRY. Pats Connor, don't mind Julia. It's bitterly she'll repent when the fit's off and she comes to think of herself. She went through a deal in waiting for you, and she loved you well. Don't take her short in her flight.

PATS. I reckon no man living would forgive her if he was in my two shoes. [Goes out.]

MIN. My father will kick the stars !

NORRY. It's deep in some people the great principles do be, Min Dillane. Though Julia mightn't think it, it's now they're showing themselves in Pats Connor, and the little vanities and follies of his youth fallen away from him entirely.

MIN. Whist, Norry Shea ! 'Tisn't his principles Julia is thinking of, but it's the loss of his curls she's lamenting. And, as sure as I am standing in my two feet, that's what has turned her mind to Edmund Normyle.

JULIA. You can be joking, Min Dillane, but I'll have no

denying it. It's more I think of Edmund Normyle now, though it's none of the love I have for him that I had in times gone by for Pats Connor.

MIN. It's a pure puzzle you are to me, Julia Shea. Well, but it's time for me to be skelping home for myself, whatever.

[MIN goes out. MATT comes in, followed by LUKE.

MATT. Well, don't be talking !

LUKE. Don't be making rack now. Be quiet and let us be soothering and soothering her.

MATT. Soothering and quiet ! How can I be quiet with this writing to Edmund Normyle in my fist asking him hither for a chat ? Psh ! Yes, and a kiss and a good-bye maybe ! How can I be quiet after what Pats Connor has told us she said to him, he fit to let down tears and the man not easily touched ? Ah, let me alone, Luke Quilter !

LUKE. I'd be nearly praising Julia for what she did and said, if she don't go too far entirely. It's no surprise to me to see her nearly out of her stems with the stories going, and she a modest and well-learned woman. Trifles that would madden her would make no pains at all for an ignorant woman such as Bridget Gildea or her likes, and not reflecting on them, but as the remark came down, a more ignorant couple never walked into the chapel at Finuig than Bridget Gildea and Edmund Normyle. Julia Shea, it's a scruple if you don't be said by me now. Let Pats Connor be brought in and we'll make spir-spar of this little tooplaish.

[Sits on chair at fire.

JULIA. It's obliged I am to you, sir, but there's no good in talking.

MATT. If she would only make spir-spar of it. But look at her now ! God help you, Norry Shea, and your head white ! 'Twouldn't trouble her if you were going with the river. But she's full of her fancies and notions, and it's selfish she is and

48 The Country Dressmaker

taken after her Aunt Mag that no one cared about at all. But what are we arguing with her for? Let her go her own way and pay the price of her lunacy.

LUKE. She can't soften, Matt Dillane, and she pondering on that German woman. It's the German woman that's the principal trouble with Julia. I'll allow it's a horrid thing to think of Pats Connor being married to a strange German woman, but if it was itself she's no more now than if she was never in the world. It's a forgivable offence, and will you look at it in that light, Julia?

JULIA. It might be forgivable, but where's the good in talking!

LUKE. That's forgiven, then. Let Matt Dillane be going on, but it's a reasonable woman you are, Julia Shea, though of course you know what's due to yourself. As well as if I was in your own mind I know what's piercing you worst of all—them tales of the way he carried on with more females after the German woman going. It's them tales that are working you and maddening you entirely.

MATT. How ravenous she is to believe all the newses of him, let them be true or false!

JULIA. Ah, where's the good in talking!

NORRY. From my heart then I can say that I don't believe a quarter of the stories that come to me about him, and if I stood in my daughter's two shoes this day there would be no scruple on me in going to the altar with Pats Connor.

MATT. But 'tisn't like her. You're a spunky woman. You showed it the time you made a match of your own with Peter Shea. That might have been a foolish thing and Peter a poor man, but you gave no thanks to all the Driscolls and they big farmers behind in Knockanasieg.

NORRY. Peter was a poor man, but he was a great and an intelligent man, and he would have done well by me if the

death didn't sweep him in his bloom. Likewise it Pats Connor, a great and an intelligent man, an' 'tisn't looking back on what bad he might have done I'd be and the great points that are in him. I am an old woman of sixty-five years of age to-day, and I hope I am a moral woman, thanks be to God, but if I was in my youth's glory, and Pats Connor and Edmund Normyle stood before me, I know which would take my fancy, an' 'tisn't his money I'm thinking of now, for I would choose Pats Connor if he hadn't a screed to his back itself.

JULIA. Where's the good in talking !

LUKE. I don't credit them fables myself. But Julia has a right to her own opinion, and we won't be contradicting her. What about if the stories are true itself ? Crime is bad, but they are divilish plenty that commit themselves. Look at Matt Hogan—that limb from Hell—and the miseries he brought on families ! Look at him, the way he does be of a market day, strutting up and down the street, tasby in him, a pair of gaiters on him, daring the people to their face ! But who'd up and say "Black your eye" to him, and he an almighty strong able man ? Psh ! He'll get a farmer's daughter to marry him in the coming time, and there's things running to him now itself, to pick him up while he's cheap in the market.

MATT. What's up with this woman, then ? If the like of Hogan will get a wife among the farmers, and we, the choicest people in the known world, glory be to God ! What's up with this poor girl to refuse what's fifty times better ?

LUKE. My dear man, it's to that I am alluding. The whole wrong Julia is doing on Pats is to be thinking of him in the same light as that known blackguard Hogan, and their cases teetotally different. No man had greater temptations than Pats Connor if he did turn reckless for a bit and mis-

50 The Country Dressmaker

conducted himself, after his time with a tippler of a German woman. My dear girl, that would drive a man wild if he was as moral as the priest ! I'll engage it's with tears in your eyes you'll be forgiving him, if you'll take that right and merciful view of his case.

JULIA. Mr. Quilter, I might be able to forgive as much as any woman, and it is to yourself I will confess it, and you talking nicely. I might be able to forgive what he done and maybe more itself. (*Pause.*) But where's the good of talking !

LUKE. Now, Julia Shea, it's the whole solution I have of your trouble, and see if you can belie me. It got fixed in your brain after you hearing all about him that his whole purpose in marrying you was to do an act of justice by you after all the time you waited. Come now, can you belie me ?

JULIA. It don't signify whether or which, Mr. Quilter, and I wouldn't belie you if I could itself.

MATT. Could the man do a finer thing ? For what should he get a greater allowance, Luke Quilter ?

LUKE. My dear Matt, Julia Shea is a refined woman, and it's love she'd be looking for and not justice. (*PATS CONNOR comes in unperceived.*) But listen to me, Julia Shea, and every word I speak now is from the heart out. There isn't a man in the world would do what Pats Connor is doing from mere justice, if he hadn't love and affection for you, great affection for you, wonderful affection for you entirely.

PATS (*advancing*). And I reckon I can corroborate Mr. Quilter's remarks, even if I am not thanked for it itself. I guess it was often you were on my mind, Julia Shea, in the latter time and I thinking of coming home, and it is a great wish that would come into my heart to see your dear face again, but I was sure that you were married and settled down for yourself, of course. These are true words that I speak

The Country Dressmaker 51

before all here, though I reckon it is little I am making of myself in saying them. But let her have the truth now, as it might be the last opportunity.

JULIA (*rising*). I will say it then, Pats Connor, that I am not worthy of you, nor was I worthy of Edmund Normyle itself. It's no great things I am at all. [Pause, sits.]

PATS. The beginning and end of it is this, I reckon. It's Edmund Normyle with you now, Julia Shea, and no one but Edmund Normyle.

JULIA (*rises*). No, it isn't of Edmund Normyle I am thinking at all. [Goes into room.]

PATS. This is a plain token surely, Luke Quilter, and I guess we have got our walking papers finally from Julia Shea.

[Going, LUKE catches him by sleeve.]

LUKE. Oh, stop a while, Pats Connor! (Puts him into chair at fire.) Isn't it an almighty hasty man you are in the line of women, after all the capers you went through itself! 'Tis softening she is, I'm telling you, and the two eyes melting inside in her head, and let her do a little considering for herself in her lonesome. Moreover 'tis something very particular entirely I have to say to Julia that I was keeping to myself till the finish. Sit down now, stay where you are, and Norry will be coaxing her back to us again. My dear man, is it the fine reputation of Luke Quilter you'd be endangering, to have it go the rounds that two he had a hand in turned out in the heel with the woman flopping out through one door and the man bounding out the other? Psh! Ptse! Will you be coaxing her down to us, Norry Shea!

MATT (*at doorway*). Allelu! Here they are! Allelu! 'Tisn't coaxing her down you need be at all, I'm thinking, Norry Shea. Isn't it breaking her neck she'll be getting refreshments for her old friends the Clothesys?

NORRY. The Clothesys, Matt Dillane! The Clothesys!

52 The Country Dressmaker

MATT. The four Clohesys itself ! Isn't this the biggest compliment ever done on a poor girl ? 'Tisn't sneaking they are to her either, or keeping a spade's distance between one another like brothers going to work or dinner, but it's in one bunch they are, chatting and prancing in a manner that you think it's a foherough is on to know who'd be foremost to have a shake hands with Julia Shea.

NORRY. Oh, Matt Dillane, 'tis well you know 'tisn't to honour her they are coming, but you joking through your temper, the Lord guard us ! What purpose is bringing them at all ? God help us, Matt Dillane ! God help us, Luke Quilter !

[*Goes into room R.C.*. Enter MICHAEL CLOHESY,
MARYANNE, BABE and ELLIE.

MICHAEL. Patrick O'Connor, 'tis here we find you, and can I credit my eyes to see you begging of scraggy things, or is the pride and manliness dead in you entirely ? There is a crowd of people on the road, and there is a mihil in Dan Curtin's field longside it. 'Tisn't working they are, for they aren't able with the tears sleeping down off their two cheeks from the dint of laughing and, saving your presence, Pats Connor, they having the haycups. Tell it to him yourself, Maryanne.

MARYANNE. How can I talk of it and I lighting with shame ? Doesn't himself know all and we watching him from the high road, after we stopping the car coming from town ? We saw you going into this poor cabin and we saw you coming out of it. It broke the melt in us to see you go into it again before the people, and we nearly fainted. Michael would gallop away, but I said I would and should come to save you and you one of my own, Pats Connor. . . . Tell it to him yourself, Michael.

MICHAEL. The horse and car is on the road, and come with

your own. We'll shake hands and let bygones be bygones. Don't mind the wretches that are putting it in your eyes that I want you for one of my daughters. If I did itself, they are good girls, and there's a fine farm of land for whoever will come into it. But it isn't to that I am alluding. 'Tis to see you respectable I want and you a relation of the wife's, and it's a good rich woman the Clothesys will make out for you if you buy the Halpin's farm.

MARYANNE. Ah, come to your own, Pats Connor !

MICHAEL. A man of your position, what pleasure have you with these scraggy things and they scorning you itself ? Come to the Clothesys, the biggest people in the parish. They will entertain you in their parlours with a heart and a half—Peg and James and Luke—and we can entertain you ourselves with a good fat pig hanging over our heads and likewise a good fat pig in the peckle. You are a smart travelled man, and the Clothesys will give you a shove up the hill to glory, and you will be a great man of the new times. It's a County Councillor the Clothesys will make of you if you will come to your own.

MARYANNE. Patsy, agragil, that dressmaker is the cause of all the difference between us. But we won't be thinking of our differences when a stranger shames either of us and we friends and relations. There's none like your own in the heel. There was no crime in that little joke of Babe and Ellie's itself. How could they help it ? Fine fresh jolly girls—she a queer person—and it's succeeding with them.

BABE. Pats, if Ellie was a saint itself, she couldn't help it. (*In a low tone.*) 'Tisn't any hand I had in it at all, but I going on with you, you rogue, and you letting on to be over-joyed !

ELLIE (*hearing her*). Listen to the liar, and she through and fro in it ! [They fight.

MICHAEL. Oh, ye female scorpions !

54 The Country Dressmaker

[*Advancing towards BABE and ELLIE, MARYANNE shoves him back and goes to them.*

MARYANNE. Babe ! Ellie ! Behave ! (*Tries to separate them.*) Will ye not be entangled in one another, my lovely girls ? My lovely girls, behave, will ye ? Babe ! Ellie ! (*Separates them.*) It's too fond of you they are, Pats. Pats, you will be coming with us now. (*BABE and ELLIE catch him by the other arm.*) It's lovingly we'll bring you, Pats, in spite of yourself. Come, Pats. If we murdered each other itself, 'tisn't to do on you we would what the dressmaker has done on you to-day, the most disgraceful act that was ever done on a man who stood in two shoes.

PATS. There is no lie in that. I reckon there is not, Maryanne Clohesy.

MICHAEL. That's the respectable man, and go with your own. If you gave that scraggy dressmaker the chance—so help my God—it's a cuckol' she'd make of you !

MATT. Away with ye, ye interloping Clohesys ! Let the case go as it will. 'Tisn't ye will have a hand in the finishing of it.

MARYANNE. Leave him, Michael ; Pats Connor is coming with us.

BABE and ELLIE. Father, Pats is coming with us.

[*BABE, ELLIE, PATS and MARYANNE go out.*

MATT. I'll break your face, Michael Clohesy !

MICHAEL. You'll break my face ! Darmurra you will ! Come on, Matt Dillane ! I am no cowardly man, and by the stars above, here's at you !

[*They rush at each other. MATT is thrown on heap of turf.*

LUKE. Where's the tongs till I crack Clohesy's skull ? (*Goes to fire. Then seeing that PATS and MARYANNE are gone.*) Oh, the slippery thing ! Has she got him entirely ?

[*Runs out.*

The Country Dressmaker 55

MICHAEL (*rushes to door*). He is going with them. We have him in the finish ! We have him, we have him ! Maryanne is a great woman. Keep your hold of him, Maryanne ! He is shaking his head at Luke Quilter. Good man, Pats Connor. Ah, look at the mountainy bococh catching him by the tail of the coat and whispering lies into his ears ! He won't come with him, will he ? Good woman, Maryanne. She has him again, and Babe and Ellie are pulling him. Fine girls ! Who is that thing running across the field ? Min Dillane ! That she may break her leg ! They are all tearing him. He is going with Maryanne and Babe and Ellie. He's going with them. He's gone with them. He is on our side at last, and so help me ! It isn't a screed of a dressmaker will put the comether on him again. Do you hear, Julia Shea, we have him !

[*Goes out.* JULIA and NORRY enter. MATT rises.]

MATT (*feeling back of head*). My poll is broken. It's shammy that's made of it, and it's near stunned I am. The treacherous villain, it's the leg he gave me. Is it gone Pats Connor is without a word ?

NORRY. Gone of his own accord. It's no more he will come to us, Matt Dillane. [Sits on sugar chair.]

MATT. It's a lonesome evening you will have of it surely. But if I overtake the ruffian, Clohesy, it's a welt for a welt I'll get or call me a coward and a shame to my clan for the rest of my days. [Goes out.]

NORRY (*to JULIA*). You have your will now. You have your will. The dark house behind in Lyre will be our doom. Tisn't the friends and neighbours will be about us in our latter end and we drawing the breath, but it's in a cold place we'll be among strangers. A plain coffin they'll make for us, and there will be no thought of us at all and we going to our long home. You have your will now. What is to be will be.

56 The Country Dressmaker

[*Sways herself.* LUKE QUILTER and MIN come in holding PATS.]

MIN. We have him again, Julia Shea!

LUKE. And it's by a struggle we brought him. Michael Clohesy had him pulled up in the ditch on us itself, till Matt Dillane came and flung Michael on his back in the puddle in the dyke. (MATT comes in.) Come. There's always time to settle cases among honest people. Let ye make the best of it. Let ye make the best of it. It's many a good man's case.

PATS. I guess these are my last words. I am willing to forgive and be forgiven. I am willing to make the best of it.

MIN (*aside*). Julia, do be spunky and make the best of it.

JULIA (*aside to MIN*). I suppose I can't be going against them all. But it isn't making the best of it I am, Min, but like Lady Clara I am as the ox going to the slaughter. Not because of the German woman, Min—for I now confess all to you—or any crime he might have done, but because he is what he is and isn't what he was, Min. Love died the first minute I saw him at Clohesys, and my dreams for ever were over.

PATS. I'm waiting for your final answer, Julia Shea.

JULIA. The spring of life is broken in me, but if it is your wish entirely, then I am willing to make the best of it.

PATS. We will make the best of it. [Embraces her.]

LUKE. It's the most timorous job I ever put of me. But it's a happy couple they'll make with their troubles behind them. I have the name of being a jolly man with no trouble on me, but for the day that's in it. That's all as I roved out, and it's only a way I have for shaping through a mournful world. With all my talk, it's many a time I had to make the best of it with each of my two first wives and even with the dead-alive thing I have now itself.

NORRY. She has made the best of it. But it is he that is

to be thanked for it—the great man, Luke Quilter, who brought her contrite in the heel. And when I go to the church to say a prayer for the repose of Peter's soul, likewise will I also say a prayer for the souls of all his departed, in the morning and in the evening time. They will never regret having made the best of it with the help of God. And she is good though she might be contrary. And he need never be ashamed of her mother's people, the Driscolls of Knockanasieg.

CURTAIN.

THE MOONLIGHTER

CHARACTERS

PETER GUERIN.

ELLEN, *his wife.*

EUGENE }
EILEEN } *their son and daughter.*

MALACHI CANTILLON, *brother to ELLEN.*

MORGAN DRISCOLL.

PEG, *his wife.*

TOM }
MAURA } *their son and daughter.*

LUKE CARMODY.

BREEDA, *his daughter.*

BIG WILLIAM CANTILLON.

SYNAN, *Captain of the Moonlighters.*

LUCY }
COSDEE }
QUIRKE } *Moonlighters.*

OTHER MOONLIGHTERS, NEIGHBOURS.

SCENE IS LAID IN KERRY.

*The First and Second Acts occur on same day ; the Third Act,
next day ; the Fourth Act, twelve months later.*

ACT I

SCENE.—*Potato garden at gable-end of PETER GUERIN'S house.*
Enter from right (by wicket) ELLEN and EILEEN.

ELLEN. No trace of Eugene in the garden, and his spade lying idle against the ditch ! Whist ! the horns are booming beyond in Carlevoye. 'Twas like the tip of a horn itself was peeping out of his pocket this morning the time he was washing his face into the skillet after he rising out of the bed. He started and reddened, and shoved whatever it was back in the pocket in a hurry when he seen me gaping at it. And if you seen the piercing look he gave me, his own mother, Eileen !

EILEEN. 'Tis surely blowing a horn he is gone to Widow Casey's eviction !

ELLEN. And Peter will hear of it, and Eugene, the darling of my heart, will be banged across the ocean. Eugene the only son left to me—Eugene that I wouldn't give the black of his nail for a hundred thousand children, if it was the will of God that I should give birth to such an almighty number ! But now he'll surely have to march it, Eileen.

EILEEN. Let us be hoping, mother, it won't come to father's ears. If it does itself, it shouldn't make much pains for father if Eugene don't come to worse, for blowing a horn is no crime in the sight of God.

ELLEN. It's a crime in the sight of Peter, and that's my

bother, girl. If he only coughed it's now nearly a crime in Peter's eyes, because Eugene do be praising the moonlighters and Peter black against them since the first day. Tim and Mike and Luke were banged, and, in the name of God ! what mercy will he have on Eugene ?

EILEEN. Sure, we must only keep praying that father will soften and that Eugene will come to the grace of God. All night I was praying for him, mother, all night and all day ; and on Saturday evening didn't I go to the Holy Well and one "Our Father" and three "Hail Marys" I said for Eugene ? And there is a hymn I have by heart I will sing to him what time he will be thinking of going out for that walk to-night. It might keep him in and prevent that fury rising in father over Eugene's night-walking.

ELLEN. Praying for him myself should be, but the words would stick in my gullet the way I am tormented from every abuse of the world, whirled about like an old bruised and battered tin-can. But 'tis for the crimes of more I am punished, Eileen, for it's nothing I ever done out of the way to deserve these stripes uncommon and severe, scarified all my days with troubles walloping at me as fierce as hailstones flaming on the slate. But now the pinnacle of my miseries is reached at last in this grief about Eugene, and the heart and soul is kilt in me entirely.

[Enter PEG from left.]

PEG. A greater trouble is on my heart about Tom. Forebodings I have of some doom coming to him and the times so cross. Forebodings I have, and tokens, and dreams.

ELLEN. Forebodings, Peg Driscoll ! What signify is your forebodings and your tokens in comparison with my plain, proved, red-hot misery over Eugene ? 'Tisn't Morgan Driscoll will bang his son like my queer man that was reared near a great house.

PEG. Forebodings I have, and tokens, and dreams.

ELLEN. Imagination, Peg Driscoll ! 'Tis a little cross rises fumes in the brain of them that do be having too much ease and pleasure and joy for themselves. 'Tis no time I ever had for imaginations, my heart riddled and I rising up a young girl itself through means of the bad name that was on my people the Cantillons. And the time you were coogling and smiling with your man Morgan, 'tis Peter was prancing before me on the floor regretting he joined the grabbing Cantillons, the hot love having cooled in him less than three months after he leading me to the altar.

PEG. This blessed day, and I taking a mug of butter to Mage Heffernan, the woman I'm joined with, I seen a lone magpie on the branch of a tree.

ELLEN (*indignantly*). 'Tis you that is to be pitied surely with your magpies ! Magpies ! Two magpies I seen for luck last April twelvemonth, the day before 'twas rumoured my brother Big William was thinking of grabbing the Lucy's land, stirring up again with double the venom the bad feeling against the Cantillons—a new and special trouble sent to me for some purpose by the Lord God, glory, honour, and praise be to His holy name !

EILEEN. Sure, mother, you should be thankful to the good God, and he to bless Uncle Malachi's efforts at arguing Big William from the grabbing in the space of eleven days !

ELLEN. Don't be talking, girl ; if there was meaning in magpies it's one I'd have perched on the half-door every hour of the day for the last forty years. Too presumptuous you are, Peg Driscoll, and to be skeeting your eye at that magpie as the signal token of Tom's coming doom—too big a thought you have of your son entirely ! Indeed, it's no lone magpie I ever remarked when Mike and Tom and Luke left me, and it's no lone magpie appeared to warn me or my

brother Malachi of the greatest tragedy ever came to us, Eugene's rising against his father.

PEG. When I was returning from Mary Quirke's I seen that same magpie dismal and lonesome perched on that same tree.

ELLEN. The same magpie ?

PEG. The same magpie, for its forebodings I have, and tokens, and dreams. A night in March Tom and his father killed a white blackbird, torching. They plucked it and cooked it and licked it, Ellen Cantillon !

ELLEN. That was unlucky, but . . .

PEG. The next morning I seen a white snipe rising out of the rushes and I picking costerwaun on the verge of the slough. It let one fearful screech and up, up with it into the blue.

ELLEN. 'Twas strange surely, but if it was itself . . .

PEG. On May Eve the Good People were seen as thick as midges on our triangle field ; there was never such murder and music as was heard going on within the fort ; and every night since there do be a clatter going about our house in a lonesome hour of the night, the chaney having every rattle on the dresser, and you'd hear the pecks and pans tumbled upside down in the dairy and flammed up against the wall.

ELLEN (*indignantly*). It's listening to you I am—it's sympathising with you I am—and what you're after telling me no more sign of danger coming to Tom, no more than 'twould be danger coming to my Eugene, but your notions and your capers. Some neighbour that's carrying your butter, my good woman. Go to the Freemasons in Tralee, get the black books opened, and you'll soon know the culprit.

PEG. There is no decrease in my butter, and a peck or a pan don't be disturbed, nor a tint of the milk spilled in the morning after all the clatter during the night. Maybe you

heard tell of that brick that fell off our chimney last Friday week ?

ELLEN. Indeed, I did not, Peg Driscoll.

PEG. A botch of a mason Martin Deverix was inside, and out with him the door like a cracked man. He comes back in a while's time. "I have put a new brick in your chimney," said he, "and I have christened it New Ireland," said he, "and 'twill remain up in that chimney," said he, "as firm as the hobstone of hell," said he, "when you and me, Peg Driscoll, are in our graves." That mortal minute a ferlynd blew up from the river. It nearly rose the thatch off the house and made holy murder roaring in the chimney. While you'd be clapping your two hands together New Ireland was down to us in flitters on the hearth.

ELLEN. Oh, God help us, Peg Driscoll !

PEG. What do I be seeing in my dreams that do make me give fearsome screams that would wake the house ? What did I see last night when I woke up in the dead hour ? Rivers of blood I seen going past our door ; and it's my son Tom I seen hanging from the gallows, a pale dead corpse I seen him hanging, Ellen Cantillon, and I seen Eugene !

[*Going towards left.*

ELLEN (*following her*). You seen Eugene hanging on the gallows tree ! You seen Eugene hanging on the gallows tree !

PEG (*going out at left as LUKE CARMODY and MALACHI CANTILLON enter from same*). I seen Eugene . . .

LUKE. Take that paw from my sleeve, Malachi Cantillon ! Don't be striving to come paddy over me, old gombeen man ! Thank God, it's none of the poor things I am that's in your power and would go into an auger hole when they'd see you facing their cabins, a hump on you looking for your interest ! You'd belie me to Peter Guerin, you would, that's my good friend and neighbour, but from my own lips he'll hear a full

account as to why I refused to give my daughter Breeda to his son Eugene.

ELLEN. Surely, Malachi, 'tisn't matchmaking you went to Mr. Carmody here, and we having it settled to make the match between Maura Driscoll and Eugene?

MALACHI (*to Ellen*). Isn't it maddened I was after taking the account to Morgan Driscoll! Well he knows his daughter Maura has the grah for Eugene, and if you seen the big smile that came on his face in spite of all he could do, for the man has no craft. Ah, it maddened me surely! and the thought came (*to Luke*) you might force Breeda to have Eugene instead of Tom Driscoll for the sake of the better land, you that likes to get full value for your cash, and you to earn it hard up to your neck in gripes and slush draining your old marsh of a farm since you were the size of a sod of turf.

LUKE: The devil's cure to you! Till you came how happy I was at Breeda taking the notion of Tom Driscoll and she a changeable and contrary girl. Twice the suitable match it seemed till you came tempting me with Peter's lovely farm. And that's what drew the insult from my lips about the time Peter held the rentwarnership, for 'twas striving to make little of your offer I was in my own mind and drive out the discontented thoughts you put into it with your tempting me.

MALACHI (*sardonically*). Ha-ha! You'd be making yourself out as simple as Morgan Driscoll that does be singing love songs, his head in the sky and he walking the road. But it's more notions was in your head than striving to overcome temptation the time you screeched "rentwarner," alluding to Peter Guerin, and you to go to the door itself to screech it the second time to make sure the servant boy would hear you, and he out in the bawn. Showing off your nationality you were because Peter is against the moonlighters and there's that bad name on the Cantillons. 'Twouldn't do that

Eugene is turning national himself, because 'tis better schemes you have in view by joining the popular Driscolls.

LUKE. The temper made me say what I said, and don't be talking, you bitter old bad-minded thing ! But if another little notion came to me itself the time I made the second screech, 'tis often a mean thought would rise in a man in a sudden and he'd be ashamed of it in the turn of a hand.

MALACHI. Little ashamed you'd be but for the fear I'd tell Peter, and it struck you maybe when you cooled that there wasn't too much to be gained by the screech after all. You're a humorous man, Luke Carmody—a solid man—a patriot for profit and a guardian of the poor !

LUKE. Well, Peter is coming, and we'll both tell our story. If I made a little slip, he has a heart to forgive. There is a heart in Peter Guerin and there is a heart in myself, thank God ! 'Tisn't like you, old gombeen man, that has nothing but a gizzard in your chest, if you have that in it itself.

ELLEN (*going to LUKE*). For the love of God, Luke Carmody, don't have a word to Peter ! There was never such murder, and the high opinion he has out of the Driscoll family. 'Tis unknown what the row wouldn't bring forth Eugene to hear of it—the Driscolls to hear of it—the match to be broke maybe ; and surely you wouldn't do that harm in us and Eugene on the verge of exile ?

MALACHI. 'Twould be his delight to break the match, and now I see his game, for 'tisn't wishing to him maybe the Driscolls should join the rentwarners and Cantillons, and Breeda marrying Tom. Isn't it great wisdom has come to you after your temper, Luke Carmody, but you aren't a match for Malachi Cantillon yet. If you say a word to Peter ! . . .

LUKE. I will, and twenty.

MALACHI (*striding up to LUKE*). Listen to me, Luke

Carmody ! 'Twas never my method to be naming them that were in my debt, but 'tis yourself that's dragging it from me that your sister Cona owes me forty pound. That forty pound she'll pay me within a week and sell out the best cows in her bawn to pay it, if I hear a syllable from you either to Peter or the Driscolls of what passed between us to-day. Will you talk to Peter now ?

LUKE (*pausing, to ELLEN*). Didn't I say my bother from start to finish was whether Malachi would talk to Peter, Ellen Cantillon, and who could trust a gombeen man ?

ELLEN. In the name of God, Luke Carmody, get shut of that notion and let us be the friends we were !. Come to our house to-morrow and do your own matchmaking, while we'll be doing ours. 'Twill show us you aren't against us, and you'll know if Peter is turned against yourself.

LUKE (*pretending to hesitate*). I'll take your advice, my honest woman. (*Going towards left*.) But God forgive you, Malachi Cantillon, and as little pity you have for me and the way I am with Breeda. (*Facetiously*.) 'Tis to be hoped you won't have as much trouble with Peter—'tis to be hoped he won't be breaking that match without Luke Carmody putting him up to it. (*Swaggering out at left, his hands behind his back under his coat-tails*.) Well, good-evening to the pair of ye, and the grace of God !

ELLEN (*looking out right*). There is a terrible fury on Peter surely, the way his arms are going. (*Lugubriously*.) Sure 'tis myself was saying to Eileen, Eugene was as good as banged, and I'm thinking all your coaxing of Peter to let you go matchmaking for Eugene was but labour in vain, Malachi.

MALACHI. 'Twas not labour in vain. There isn't a thought in the heart of Peter unknown to me, you foolish woman. Obstinate as he is in points about principles and conduct, in the general way of acting according to custom no man is more

tender of what the people do be saying of him than Peter Guerin. That's how I coogled him into giving me leave to go matchmaking for Eugene, and I putting it in his eyes the people would think it queer to be keeping him single and he up to the age for marrying. If Eugene don't go to the devil entirely, Peter will be ashamed to balk us now, Ellen Cantillon.

ELLEN. How could I have better luck than to have him go to the devil entirely, Malachi ? If he don't go now, won't he go after marrying and ruin himself and he independent ?

MALACHI. Let what will come after. There is great power and taming in them few words the priest says over a man and another man's daughter. Be satisfied, 'tis our only way of chaining him now whatever, as my advice wasn't taken to put him into the Customs the time he was leaving school, and a good tack under Her Majesty able to suck nationality from the biggest rebel ever trod in two feet.

ELLEN. Is another misfortune coming to me to be blamed in the wrong ? What say had I in his career and his contrairy father full master ? But if I had itself how was I to have knowledge he'd turn outrageous national in the practical way ?

MALACHI. 'Tisn't blaming you I am at all.

ELLEN. And indeed, Malachi, shrewd as you are, yourself was mistaken about Eugene, and he totally different from his brothers that would be silent statues on the hearth by us, and out with them through the bedroom window away on their marauding in the dead hour of the night. Isn't it often smiling to ourselves we'd be and whispering there was no harm in Eugene with his silly talk of the old times, his loud lamentations for the sorrows of Dark Rosaleen, and he up till dawn his two eyes stuck in a paper reading them fables of the battle of Landen and the battle of Fontenoy ?

[Enter PETER GUERIN hurriedly from right.]

PETER. Where is Eugene from the garden ? Is it gone he is and reckless left a ridge unplanted ?

ELLEN. Reddening his pipe he is somewhere in the shelter behind the ditch. (*Taking up basket.*) 'Tis the lovely seed I have here for him to finish the ridge, an eye in every skelp as sound as a bell, Peter Guerin. 'Tis a wonderful garden we'll have entirely, big green stalks up and covering the furrows before a neighbour in the parish, with the help of God !

PETER. The bay colt is absent from the inch whoever swept him. Ha ! what sound is that to the west ?

ELLEN (*catching PETER by arm*). Our garden won't shame us this season, Peter ; 'tisn't like what happened the year that's gone through means of the faulty seed. (*Takes her hand inadvertently off PETER, turns and looks upwards.*) But what did I do on Eleanor Horan and Anne Faley to say our failure was the fruit of my bad cutting of the seed—what harm but I the finest warrant to quarter a potato in the ring of Ireland !

PETER (*who has rushed up garden and got on top of "ditch"*). I see him . . . !

ELLEN (*turning round in a panic*). You see him ! Peter ! Oh, God help us !

PETER. Look at him now on our bay colt, look at him and he blowing out of that thing like a pure savage ! (*Comes off ditch.*) Didn't I know the badness was rising in him, though the two of you would be striving to make spir-spar of his praising the moonlighters and his roaming in the night. But can you deny it now, Malachi Cantillon, that he's on the road to become a picked blackguard itself ?

MALACHI. Ptse ! his blowing a horn would give me no trouble, if it didn't come to the ears of the agent who might take a notion to rise the rent in us for draining the quarry field.

PETER (*harshly*). 'Tisn't talking I am against the act of

blowing a horn, but 'tisn't for the good of Widow Casey he threw down his spade and went off on his canter. But 'tis the obstinate villainy inside in his stomach made him go blowing out of that horn, and it's a sign to me, if I wanted another sign, that he'll be a thorough blackguard. He is a painted blackguard, I'm saying, Malachi Cantillon.

MALACHI. Time for you be tired of saying it, my gay man, and you at it for six months.

PETER. It is tired I am of saying it, but I'm telling there is going to be a sudden stop put to the badgering between myself and Eugene. All of my name were big-spirited decent farmers that never done a mean or underhand act, and there was never a blackguard in my clan to match the sons I reared. But no blackguard will remain in my house to shame me before the world, and before the week is out Eugene will get the cost for a distant place.

ELLEN. 'Tis hard and unjust you are to Eugene that never went raking after bad-charactered women like Tim or Mike. And he is no moonlighter if he praises them itself. A hundred times worse was Luke before the notion came to you to chase him beyond the seas.

MALACHI. Let him pack him off, let him pack him off, but 'tis me that's disgraced after taking the account of match-making to the Driscolls ! Ashamed of my life I'll be to put my snout outside the door for a month !

PETER (*advancing to MALACHI*). You took the account of a match ! Ah, that I may never get a day's good of yourself and your zeal ! The devil break your bones, what pinched you to skelp away at the glint of dawn ?

MALACHI. This is my thanks for doing what I was told, and yourself after saying to me to take the account the time you were going to bed last night.

PETER. Isn't it half ravelling I was and we talking foolish ?

Oh, I wished last night was back again ! But the devil is done now and you are the cause of it, Malachi Cantillon. I'd nearly twist your neck !

[EUGENE GUERIN and TOM DRISCOLL come over stile.

EUGENE (*blows horn*). Isn't it wonderful music comes out of it and it only a cow's horn ! Wonderful music when the right national heart is in a man for rising the tune ! Isn't it rousing it is ! Often in the evening time and I alone by myself, didn't it seem to me like a cry from the heart of Dark Rosaleen herself when the sound of the horn would come to me lonesome booming over hills and vales from beyond in rack-rented Carrignavar. [Blows.

TOM (*laughing*). Eugene, you're the dickens painted and your father prancing !

EUGENE. Then let him prance, for it's a grand day's work for Ireland this horn is after doing, and it calling to her children from far and near to do battle against those devils from hell, the police and bailiffs. [PETER laughs sardonically.

TOM. We had a grand day surely, Peter Guerin, and don't be talking ! The people were there in hundreds, and pebbles flying like sixty ! The peelers were savage, but I'm thinking Sergeant Curtin has a pain in his head from the riser of a stone he got in the ear from Andy Sofine.

EUGENE (*blows*). A glorious day for Ireland !

TOM (*laughing*). A bigger shout went up when Barton the bailiff got a kettle of boiling water down his neck from Kate Horan and he starting to work with the battering-ram. Oh, 'twas great sport, and hadn't we the band of Lyre itself that played the Caseys out in the finish and will play them in again in six months' time, maybe.

EUGENE (*blows*). A glorious day it was, and to hell with the enemies of Ireland !

TOM (*laughing*). It's a wonderful national man you are,

Eugene ! The people is all talking of him, Peter Guerin. They hardly believed 'twas him at first blowing the horn, and he galloping over the fences like a cracked man ! Then "Sound to you, Eugene Guerin," they said, "sound to you, Eugene. A better man than Luke he'll be itself," they said, and they cheering. (*Laughs.*) I'm thinking, Peter, he won't leave a trace of the bad name on the Cantillons, and 'tis a popular man he'll make of you even if you're against the moonlighters itself, for the people will only be thinking of the time yourself and my Uncle Martin were big friends and Fenians in the year '67.

EUGENE. Fenians in '67 surely. But 'twasn't your Uncle Martin but my father became a rentwarner in '77, Tom Driscoll.

PETER. Is it you that's daring to allude to that ?

EUGENE. It is daring I am to allude to it and the way you're making little of the grand thoughts rising in me, yourself bulging with pride out of your high principles. But I am thinking you lost the high principles the time you took the rentwarnership, and the principles that are lost can be found no more. (*Band is heard passing on road at top of garden playing "God save Ireland."* EUGENE *rushes up garden and gets on top of stile, waving his hat.*) It's the national band of Lyre ! Cheers for the national men of Lyre ! Cheers for the national men of Lyre !

[*Sound of voices cheering in return while band keeps on playing. Getting off ditch and singing to the air.*

God save Ireland, cried the heroes,
God save Ireland, cried they all—

EUGENE and TOM (*together*)—

And whether upon the scaffold high,
Or in the battlefield we die—
Sure no matter when for Erin dear we fall !

TOM. Going home I must be now. The mother will be mournful pondering where am I since dawn.

[*Going towards left. The Angelus rings. PETER and MALACHI take off their hats, and they, with Ellen, commence to mumble some prayers.*]

EUGENE. The bell is ringing and let us be starting for Glountane. 'Twill take us to reach it the time the moon is rising above the heights of Derk.

TOM (*laughing*). Don't be alluding to Glountane, Eugene ! Sure, I must show myself to herself and gobble a couple of bites, for 'tis famished I am, faith.

EUGENE. 'Tisn't hungry I am, for it's thinking I am of our glorious meeting with the friends of Dark Rosaleen. But I'll go to your house and we can start together, Tom Driscoll.

PETER (*catching EUGENE*). What's taking you to Glountane, the place where the moonlighters do be gathering to in the night ? (*Shoves EUGENE away.*) No, 'tisn't you I'll be asking, but Tom Driscoll, an honest boy that wouldn't tell a lie. (*To TOM.*) Before God, now, is it to be sworn in is taking you to the lonesome glen ?

TOM (*laughing*). That I may be dead and damned if I am, Peter Guerin ! Well, you're the crackedest man !

[*EUGENE and TOM go out at right.*]

PETER (*walking slowly to left. Roughly*). Take that seed back into the house, Ellen Cantillon ! (*Turns half round.*) Blackguards ! Blackguards ! Isn't it against blackguarding I always was, Malachi Cantillon, and isn't it a straight man I am myself, though maybe it's a foolish man I am in my time. Foolish in my time surely, but thoughts do come to me that no man knows, and curious notions, and maybe there's times I see a longer way than them that's wise in their generation and has their eyes in kippens that nothing can

surpass and they up to every dodge and trick of the world.
And I hope to God you won't regret your part in this business,
Malachi Cantillon.

[Goes out at left.]

ELLEN. What is he saying, Malachi?

MALACHI (*shrugging his shoulders*). He don't know what he's saying. He made a good guess at the swearing-in surely, but it's laughing to myself I was and the faith he put in the word of Tom Driscoll. He told no lie indeed, for it's my belief the same Tom is in the moonlighters for twelve months. I have my eye on Tom. But there is one thing clear to me now, Eugene is surely going to be sworn in a moonlighter.

ELLEN. We couldn't have better luck and my last hope is gone.

MALACHI (*goes up garden*). I'll be in the lonesome glen too for that swearing-in, but I'll be there unbeknownst, Ellen Cantillon. Whispers I heard of bad work brewing, and maybe I'll know to-night if Eugene is to be in it. Our Eugene is going astray, but I'll know all when the moon is above the woods of Derk.

[*Getting up stile.*

ELLEN. He is going astray entirely.

MALACHI. He is going astray entirely. I was thinking 'twas only a little spurt had come over him through means of his rupture with Breeda Carmody, for hundreds go shaping one way or another to rise thoughts in a female they'd be fond of, or to grig her maybe. But 'twas too ready he agreed to marry Maura Driscoll, and now I see 'twas only a farmer's fancy he has for Breeda. 'Tis the fever of the agitation has caught him in the finish, and where 'twill land him God alone can tell.

[*Goes over stile.*

CURTAIN.

ACT II

SCENE.—*A lonely part of the glen.* MALACHI comes out from bush and looks about him. He sees ELLEN entering cautiously from right.

MALACHI. Well, the devil isn't the master of a female in the line of curiosity ! Is it mad you were to come clattering after me, or what the dickens has pinched you at all ?

ELLEN. Sure, isn't it chasing after Eileen I am, she to make for the glen thinking maybe the moonlighters would murder you, or maybe 'tis some notion she has of putting the fear of God into Eugene by the power of her faith and prayers, and the grand vocation rising in her for the holy nuns of mercy. No wonder if it's anxious she is about you whatever, Malachi, you doting on her, and always saying she'll have the gold when your day is over.

MALACHI. God forbid 'tisn't after losing herself she is in the cross and darksome country !

ELLEN. She went out of my view in the finish, and I after keeping my eye on her all on by the woods of Graigue, through the plain of Coumpane, and I to nearly overtake her in the big turnip garden below Pats Vicky's house. But in the brown bogs of Shrone she left me far behind, she skipping and hopping and I floundering and flopping and sinking up to my knees in the sousy quagmires, and when I got on the solid land and I blowing and panting like a sukky calf 'tis blinked

entirely I was by Eileen, and she going like a bird over the gap in Roger Shea's bounds ditch.

MALACHI. Didn't you call after her and screech ?

ELLEN. How could I call and I in one shiver at the thought of being caught by the moonlighters ? Isn't it striving to make no noise I was in dread I'd be handled and thrown down the cliff of Graigue, rolling over rocks and sharp stumps and every misfortune till I'd reach the bottom to die like a beast and I bleeding like a pig ? I only said " pish-wish " after her like you would to a cat.

MALACHI. Her little heart will burst if her faith don't save her. Worse than moonlighters itself would be the peelers. For the devil is ugly if he is as ugly as a peeler rising out of a gripe, and he sick and sore from watching for moonlighters and the sour porter dying away in his stomach. Whist ! there are two coming—it's Eugene and Tom ! Hide, will you !

[Shoves her in behind bush. EUGENE and TOM come in from left.]

TOM. 'Tis here we meet, Eugene. We do be drilled along that path, and out the glen we march and up the long field where the old crab-tree is in the corner. 'Tis there we makes the wheel-about. Often we give ten rounds of that field itself, for the Captain is death on drilling, and he always alluding to us as soldiers.

EUGENE. Is this the spot you were sworn in ?

TOM. Beside the holly bush. 'Twas in the month of January, and I won't forget the way the night came down, rain sleeping from the heavens like you'd pour it out of a skillet. Glory ! 'twas the biggest soaking and perishing I ever got, Eugene.

EUGENE. Is it the elements were troubling you in that glorious hour ? Isn't it thinking you were of Granuaile—

of what she was in times gone by and the splendour that would come to her again surely in another day ?

TOM. God forgive me, Eugene, I had no fine thoughts like that at all ! 'Twas more chance than purpose brought me and I to ramble here with Jamesie Quirke, a servant boy of Harty's. 'Twas after playing a goose in cards we were and I had a share of porter taken. In course Jamesie was a moonlighter for years.

EUGENE. 'Tis mistaken I am and I always thinking you a national man.

TOM (*laughing*). Sure, what am I but a national man, Eugene ?

EUGENE. Disappointed I am, Tom Driscoll. Disappointed I am and the finest things in my mind. You'd put down a man's heart. It's cold you are, and maybe your heart isn't in the glorious work at all. Now I remember that big sigh you gave and we passing Luke Carmody's gate. Tell me, Tom Driscoll, is it thinking you are of renayging the cause ?

TOM (*laughing*). I am thinking of no such thing, Eugene ! (*Sadly.*) Sure, 'twas of Breeda Carmody I was thinking when I let that sigh, but I was shy of telling you my trouble and you still fond of her maybe ; though 'tis no ill-will you have to me because she took that sudden fancy for me, Eugene.

EUGENE. The thoughts of Breeda are far from me now. But wherefore should you be troubled ? In a few days' time won't you have her chained by the power of the Church, and her coaxing eye will dare go stray-ways no more ?

TOM. 'Twasn't a doubt of her drew that terrible sigh from me, Eugene, but a sudden thing that pierced me to the very heart itself—a thought that it would be a woful tragedy if any danger overtook me to prevent myself and Breeda having the loving time together we were thinking we'd have.

EUGENE. Wasn't that a cowardly thought to come in a rousing time ?

TOM. I couldn't help it. Sure, 'twas a foolish thought, for a man is as safe in the moonlighters as out of them. And if the choice fell on a man to do a bad deed itself, 'tisn't him might be hung at all but some one as free of the crime as Jesus Christ himself, if he hadn't his alibi correct or was about the vicinity. The peelers don't care a devil but to make a case ; the judge don't give a whack but to choke you for an example, and a jury of Cork Scotchmen would swing the nation on circumstantial evidence.

EUGENE (*angrily*). Don't be talking of swinging and choking the night that is in it, Tom Driscoll !

TOM. Sure, 'tis only alluding I am ; but there is a deal a man might have to do he wouldn't think he'd have to do and he going to join the moonlighters.

EUGENE. Is it thinking to coward me you are, Tom Driscoll ? 'Tis a shame for you ; 'tis a shame for you, I'm saying !

TOM (*laughing*). 'Tis only talking I am, and don't be wild, Eugene. If a man had luck the choice might never fall on him to commit a crime. It didn't fall on myself yet, thank God ! There is a noise coming through the brambles. It could be the lads, Eugene, for the moon is shining through the black trees of Derk.

EUGENE (*turning and looking out left*). There's forms moving. They are coming towards us. They are men.

TOM. 'Tis the Captain himself that's first. I warrant all cowardly thoughts will leave me when he is to the fore, Eugene, for 'tis into an auger hole I'd go when he'd be putting the eyes through me and he mournful always. Ah ! it's a rousing way our Captain has, Eugene, and he a wonderful hero surely.

[Enter SYNAN from right, followed by MORISHEEN LUCY, JAMESIE QUIRKE, MICHAELEEN COSDEE, and other moonlighters.]

SYNAN. Now we are all together, boys of Meenanaar ! Is there a stranger amongst us ? Is that a stranger I see in the brown caubeen ?

TOM (*coming forward*). No stranger, Captain, but a neighbour, and the most raging national man ever walked the banks of Galey river—Eugene Guerin, that has come to be ordained.

SYNAN (*putting his arm out lengthways and holding some bauble between his fingers*). Then, Eugene Guerin, kiss the Cause ! (EUGENE kisses bauble.) Now take him, men, to the holly bush and swear him in a soldier in the Army of the Night.

EUGENE (*as he moves along with moonlighters*). Proud I am to join the boys of Meenanaar, the friends of Dark Rosaleen ! Great is their deeds and great is their glory ! great is the fame that's out of them through all the world wide !

[*Murmurs of applause from moonlighters.*]

SYNAN (*speaking in a low tone to TOM and those near him, while the other moonlighters in a muttering way are administering the oath to EUGENE*). Grand is our work surely, but small the glory that has ever come to us since we first rose up under another name a long while ago. But 'tisn't glory is troubling us, for there's a fierce thing makes us go out battling in the night—a fierce thing since the first of us rose up out of the ground that is scorched with the salt tears of the generations and with the tears of blood of the generations, and the churchyards full of the helpless innocent that were wronged and murdered by tyrants.

[*Moonlighters and EUGENE rise up.*]

MONLIGHTERS. We have sworn him in, Captain dear !

SYNAN (*taking a step forward and shaking hands with*

EUGENE). A stranger you were a while ago, and a stranger you were yet and you talking like a man of Erin. But now it's a stranger you are no more, Eugene Guerin, and it's the same as if you were with us a thousand years. Soon you will be put through your facings, Eugene Guerin, and the mettle of your bravery will be known. To-morrow night you will repair, at the hour of seven o'clock, to Morgan Driscoll's inch. From there we start to make our attack on the Great House for guns. (*Wheels about.*) Let every man be in the inch prepared and ready, waiting for his marching orders at the hour of seven o'clock.

MOONLIGHTERS. We will surely, Captain dear !

SYNAN. There was never a time we were so well armed and powerful, and victory is sure. We'll take the guns without a struggle maybe ; but if we have a battle itself, 'tis time we made a dash and whispers going that we, the men of Meenanaar, are in dread to face the barricades, though we'd be as bold as brass in ourselves breaking into sooty cabins and the houses of the common farmers. There must be no shame on the boys of Meenanaar, for we're no cowards surely.

QUIRKE (*staggers about in a drunken way*). By Jaycus, there was never a coward in Meenanaar !

SYNAN. Arising out of the attack on the Great House I have a little private affair to settle of my own. 'Tisn't my wish to keep it secret from my loyal band, but there are things a man do be shy to allude to, and if I told what I'm going to do I'd have to refer to what I don't want to refer. Believe me, I'll manage it nice and handy, without bother, but I'll pitch on two to stand by me at the Great House for fear I'd make some slip. 'Tis only a trifle, and they won't renayge me. I choose Tom Driscoll and Eugene Guerin.

TOM (*striding forward*). 'Tisn't alone a trifle I'd do for you,

Captain ; through the fires of hell I'd go itself if you but gave the word.

EUGENE. Here's likewise, Captain Synan. Griping I am to do a man's part in the work of glory.

COSDEE. 'Tis a curious thing, Captain, and I won't go behind your back to say it—'tis a curious thing that 'tis Eugene Guerin and Tom Driscoll, the two last to join our society, should be chosen for confidential duty. It's putting a slight, I'm saying, on more of us that's tried and tested and proved loyal men.

A MOONLIGHTER. Don't be rising your voice against the Captain, Michaeleen Cosdee ! Isn't it after excusing himself he is and saying 'tis only a trifle he wants done by the recruits ? Don't be rising your voice against the Captain. If you're long joined itself no shining deed gives you the claim to speak.

COSDEE. You're a liar that's talking, for there isn't in Meenanaar a man more fierce than Michaeleen Cosdee !

SYNAN. Be silent, Cosdee ! No slight is meant for you, and no slight was ever meant for you, though 'tis often you do be growling and giving sour under-looks. No more of this now, for 'tis me, not you, that's Captain in Meenanaar. (*Making a swerve with his arm.*) Now for our marching exercise, boys, for all we'll arrange to-night is the attack on the Great House.

LUCY (*coming forward*). Captain Synan, I am no insubordinate man, but all here heard the report that Murt Pringle is to get possession to-morrow of my father's land, and it's disappointed I am to hear no word from you about the grabber. Weren't we always saying the day what man would take my father's land that day he would pay the bloody price ?

QUIRKE (*staggering about*). We were, and, by Jaycus ! let us draw the lots to see who'll be the happy man will have the sport of letting the light through that limb from the devil,

the grabber of the Lucys' land. To-morrow, by Jaycus, he'll be dead, and to-morrow, by Jaycus, he'll be damned !

SYNAN. Jamesie Quirke, 'tis me is Captain here, and 'tis me is to give the word if the lots are to be drawn. You're drunk, Jamesie Quirke, you're staving drunk, you clown, and it isn't your first time coming staving drunk to our meeting-place. You're no credit to Meenanaar ; you're double paid with drink and money for every job you do, and there's no trust in the like of you that has your senses drownded for the seven days of the week.

JAMESIE. Isn't it in want of money I am, Captain, and what crime is there in taking coin and lush from the sympathisers ? Don't hundreds do the same ? I drinks a fearful lot surely, but, by damned ! if I was swimming in booze from dawn till dark no enemy of the Cause would hear a syllable after Jamesie Quirke !

MOONLIGHTERS. No fear of Jamesie, Captain, he's loyal though he's a rake—sure, there was never an informer in the moonlighters.

MORISHEEN LUCY. Wherefore draw the lots at all ? Isn't it after saying it I am a thousand times, 'tis me is the man should shoot the hound that grabs my father's land ? Wherefore the drawing of the lots when there is a hearty volunteer ?

SYNAN. Morisheen Lucy, our rules are that each man takes his chance in the draw, and you dare go against the rules while I am the Captain of the moonlighters ! But we aren't sure of the grabber yet, and no lots are to be drawn to-night.

QUIRKE. By Jaycus, I'm sure of him ! I have it from Tomaus Clobber that Murt Pringle is the man. He is to get possession to-morrow, I hear, but to-morrow, by Jaycus, he'll be dead, and to-morrow, by Jaycus, he'll be damned !

SYNAN. The land isn't grabbed yet, and again I say it, no lots are to be drawn to-night.

LUCY. That's queer entirely, Captain Synan.

QUIRKE. By Jaymony, Captain, if you weren't the man you are I'd say 'tis some feeling you have for Pringle of Patch.

SYNAN (*in a rage*). What are ye both saying? What are ye saying to me at all?

LUCY. Forgive me, Captain Synan; my temper that's working me and I so hopeful of having the matter of the grabber settled to-night.

QUIRKE (*weeping loudly*). Forgive me likewise, Captain, sure I don't know what am I saying, and I boozed, by James!

SYNAN. Maybe 'tis too hasty I am in myself, for 'tis that attack on the Great House I want to be talking about, to be telling the boys of Meenanaar to be working themselves up to it, till they'd be raging, half-maddened, frothing at the mouth itself—that's the way I want the boys of Meenanaar. (*Loud applause from moonlighters.*) And that's how I want you to be, Morisheen Lucy; but when our victory is won, if you're then impatient to do for the grabber before we have our regular meeting, I give you leave to break our rule, or any other hot volunteer that wants to send him to his home in hell.

[*Further applause from moonlighters.*]

LUCY. Grateful I am to you entirely, Captain Synan. Sure you couldn't but feel for me and that grabber in my mind, the same as there's something on your own mind you want done for yourself and you calling on Eugene Guerin and Tom Driscoll.

SYNAN. Something I want done for myself, this man has said. 'Tisn't designedly you spoke, Morisheen Lucy, but 'tis a piercing thing you have said to me surely. A long time I have been working in the Cause, and no man till now could say

I wanted something done for myself, or that I looked for gain out of what I done in this world or in the next, glory be to God ! Many a gun I have taken and many a meadow I have spiked ; many a threatening notice I have posted up in all parts of the parish and the police after my heels ! But was it for myself I did all that ? (*Loud negative shouts from moonlighters.*) Was it for myself I went jail for threatening would-be grabbers and the sympathisers of grabbers, landlords and emergencymen ?

MOONLIGHTERS. No, Captain !

SYNAN. Was it for myself I went jail for saving the cattle of unfortunates from the hands of the police and bailiffs ?

MOONLIGHTERS. No, Captain !

SYNAN (*swinging his arm about*). 'Twas this hand that sent grabber Curtin to his doom ! 'Twas this hand that split the black heart in the tyrant Fesberry after it drawing him down off his black charger and he stepping the white road gay and proud that morning in July ! 'Twas this hand that did what it did to Murt Horan, the unfortunate wretch, who was my bosom friend and schoolfellow a long time before ! "And would you hurt me, Synan ?" said he, and we in the loneliest place with the moon shining in the frosty sky. "Pray to your God," I said. "Sure, you wouldn't injure me, Synan," said he ; "sure, you wouldn't pull that trigger for the world," said he. "Pray to your God," I said. And again he was beginning to jabber, but . . . ! (*Making a sharp clap with his hands.*) A walk of seven miles through lonesome fields I had after doing it, boys of Meenanaar, and 'twasn't for myself I did it, Morisheen Lucy.

MOONLIGHTERS. 'Twas not, Captain !

SYNAN. The thing that I am going to do in the finish I wanted to do a long while ago if the opportunity came to me. But now I'm joyful surely, men of Meenanaar, that the chance

didn't come to me to do what I wanted to do a long while ago. For if it did, maybe I wouldn't be the man I came to be, with the fiercest hatred brewing in me was ever in a man against the tyrants. But now 'twon't signify when I have settled this little account of my own, though 'tis never quiet I'd sleep in the grave if it wasn't settled surely. I want no praise from no man, but 'tis another such as myself I'd like to name as Captain after me—a man with the same hatred, with the one thought in his head and he half mad with it, no doubt on him but wonders growing to him, and he savage labouring for the Cause. I wished I could name the man, for my hour is approaching, men of Meenanaar.

MONLIGHTERS (*weeping*). Oh, Captain, 'tisn't thinking of death you are and you so young !

SYNAN. My age is twenty-five, but my end is drawing near. There is them has heard the banshee three times and she making for our cabin. Up the banks of the river she do be coming, the voice going in and out with every turn of the river, and it flowing crooked through the green inches. Don't I know 'tis me she's wanting and she always following the Synans ? I am no shaky man, but I'm thinking I'll meet my doom in the attack on the Great House. But if I drop itself 'tis brave men I'll have about me in the heel, and brave men I'll leave behind me in Meenanaar. Turn about and march ! It's the last time I'll be drilling ye out the glen maybe. Forward and march, men of Meenanaar ! Out the glen ye go quick ! March ! March !

[*Moonlighters go out at right. MALACHI and ELLEN come from behind bushes.*]

ELLEN. Mother of God, shield us ! wasn't it a lucky thing the crazy Captain forbade the drawing of the lots ? Pepperin I was and my heart having every lep up into my mouth ! 'Tis some consolation, Malachi, that the lots weren't drawn—a

little consolation, I mean, only the name of a consolation indeed.

MALACHI (*sardonically*). Why, then, it isn't even the name of a consolation itself ; and isn't it planning I am this mortal minute how to put a stop to the attack on the Great House ? I caution you to be silent if you don't want me to be massacred and torn asunder limb from limb. Be silent, for I'm telling you it's a timorous thing I'm venturing ; but if that attack comes off there will be holy murder and bloody war.

ELLEN. What foolish hope was in me, then, I thinking of only a few scrapes and skirmishes and the moonlighters in high conquering game ?

MALACHI. 'Tis what themselves is thinking of maybe, and the great fun there is in blazing away at windows. But let the battle go how it will, Eugene and Tom have small notion 'tis they will have to murder Cook's nephew if the Captain misses him—the young gentleman that came home last night from the Indies, Ellen Cantillon. I know why the Captain was ashamed to talk of it before the seasoned moonlighters and chose the recruits : 'tis all on account of his sister.

ELLEN (*crooking her head and shoulders forward. In a low tone*). The Captain's sister Mage that had the bye-child with young Cook the time he seduced her long ago ?

MALACHI (*sotto voce*). And what about that bad death she got in the heel drownded in the bogs and her black head frozen in a block of ice ?

ELLEN (*loudly*). Holy murder and bloody war ! Holy murder and bloody war !

MALACHI (*catching her*). Behind the bush with you again ! They are coming back—in a gallop they are coming—it's the peelers is after them surely !

[MALACHI and ELLEN hide behind bushes. Re-enter from right, TOM DRISCOLL, COSDEE, LUCY, and QUIRKE.

QUIRKE. They're blinked, by damned ! The devil carry me ! I'll wager the dirty things didn't catch or cuff a single man of Meenanaar ! But, Jaymony, 'twas a scruple we hadn't our guns !

TOM (*laughing*). Well, 'twas the suddennest thing ! They had the Captain but for as smart as he took to the river. Lord, what little dread was on him to face the deep and it black and cold ! But God or the devil wouldn't coward our Captain !

COSDEE. Where was the bravery and Synan the finest swimmer in Meenanaar ? Maybe you'll say 'tis bravery made Eugene Guerin fly into a dyke of briars at the screech of "Peelers !" where he'll be surely nabbed and the peelers will put such fear of God into him that he'll inform against the boys of Meenanaar !

TOM (*laughing*). God help you, Michaeleen, the power of man couldn't make a turncoat of Eugene ! He won't be caught, for the peelers never seen him in the rush, and I'll warrant he'll make his way out the gullet and over the bogs home.

COSDEE. If he isn't caught 'tisn't himself he need thank, and it's the gammy moonlighter he is that didn't pause and think where to run like the rest of us, but to bolt in disorder the way he did like a blind mad bull ! And 'tis him our famous Captain chooses for special confidences, and maybe is thinking of naming him as leader after himself in Meenanaar !

LUCY (*as they go on towards left*). 'Tis thinking I am of what gave that warning screech of peelers ! (EILEEN comes in at right unperceived.) 'Tisn't wrangling you should be,

Cosdee, on account of it, but grateful to whoever is watching over us. For it was the strangest screech. It came out of a bush—like a voice from the other world it was. And if they had the power, sure what wonder if the spirits of the dead would come to help us in our great uprising against the oppressors !

[*They go out at left.*

EILEEN. 'Twas me screeched.

ELLEN. Misfortune again, Malachi. See how the something put her in the way of screeching ; 'twouldn't be punishment enough for us to see him nabbed by peelers. Oh no, we must see him wallowing in holy murder and bloody war !

EILEEN. 'Twas the devil tempted me, then ! There's great sorrow in me now. The grace of God is gone from me, for I can't repent ; for if the chance of screeching came again to me I'd screech surely. I could never let the lads be caught by the peelers.

[*EUGENE comes in from right.*

EUGENE (*pulling MALACHI by collar of coat*). I have you, you grey and grizzled eavesdropper ! Spy of the world, I'll warm you for committing the sacrilege of listening to our plans for the glorious attack on the Great House ! You shameless old badger, I'll leather you within an inch of your life !

ELLEN. We didn't hear a haporth, Eugene. Myself and Malachi are after straying into this quarter only on the hop of the venture of meeting Eileen returning from taking a message from the nuns to Miss Proctor—that old single dame beyond that gives her the flowers in style for the Quarant 'Ore.

EUGENE. Spying ye were, but 'tis you I blame for it, you grinning codger. (*Giving MALACHI a little slap.*) Take that now !

[*MALACHI's hat half falls off.*

MALACHI (*sourly*). Be careful with your tricks, I'm telling you ! (*EUGENE gives him another slap ; his hat falls off.* MALACHI *picks it up.*) Be careful again, I'm saying, with your nudging, Eugene Guerin !

EUGENE (*giving him another slap*). Amn't I careful entirely, aroo ? [Gives MALACHI a harder slap.

MALACHI. Is it thinking you are of hurting me in earnest ? Is it careless you are you might shorten my days by a mortal wound ? Give me that stick now, and no more of your pinching and capering !

[*Makes a dart and snatches stick from EUGENE, shoving EUGENE back, who falls down near bushes.*

EILEEN (*running to EUGENE*). Oh, Eugene, don't let your temper rise ! If Uncle Malachi heard your secrets itself, wouldn't it be the last thought in his head to tell the police ?

EUGENE (*half rising*). I'll murder him with one welt of that big stone—that's what I'll do !

MALACHI (*advancing*). Don't attempt to lay a hand to that corrig ! Old I am and wrinkled maybe, but, by the living God above me, no man will take my life while there is a stroke in this arm ! There is a stroke in this old arm, an almighty stroke in this old arm, and I'll kill before I'm killed, Eugene Guerin !

EUGENE (*rises*). I'll murder him with a clout ! I'll murder him with a clout !

EILEEN (*clinging to EUGENE*). For the love of God be merciful, Eugene !

ELLEN. Hold him, Eileen ! Hold him, Eileen ! Think of yourself, Eugene, and you mad with nationality ! Would it be wishing to you if your uncle dropped down excited and he worn with the age ?

EUGENE. I'll murder him ! I'll murder him !

EILEEN. Come home, Eugene ! Come home, Eugene !

[*Sings.*

O Paradise ! O Paradise !

O how I long to see ! etc.

EUGENE (*when EILEEN has finished singing verse*). I will go home then, Eileen. Be thankful for your skin to this child, Malachi Cantillon, and never again come spying after a national man of Ireland !

[*They go out at right. Before curtain falls EILEEN is heard singing the two last lines of verse.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE.—*Interior of PETER GUERIN'S kitchen.* ELLEN is sitting down at fire and poking it with tongs. Enter MALACHI.

MALACHI. The information is given and the moonlighters are baulked. By this old Cook has his warning, likewise the Captain the anonymous writing telling him stay at home, for himself the night that's in it. 'Tis old Debby I chartered to deliver both the messages—the milkwoman at the Great House. Not without big expense, faith ; indeed, I had to put my hand in my pocket and land her out my ten shillings and fippence.

ELLEN. Ten and fippence to a milkwoman ! Isn't she the ferocious bloodsucker ! Howbe, the money isn't squandered if it's the means of saving Eugene from holy murder and bloody war.

MALACHI. My only bother is some clatter I heard in the men's room of the Great House and I bargaining with Debby in the flagged passage. She said it was a cat, but, the Lord guard us ! if it could be Teig Wren, the new servant-boy from Tralee ! In sure, Teig, all unbeknownst to the quality as pays him, is a painted moonlighter entirely and wouldn't scruple to open the hall-door to the gentlemen from Meenanaar.

ELLEN. I doubt if it was a cat. I'll warrant we won't have so much luck if that new scapular Eileen put around your

neck and you going out the door this morning didn't work some miracle of mercy with our Heavenly Father above, praise be to His holy name—amen !

MALACHI. 'Tis the riskiest venture I ever drew on me surely. But don't be dreaming it was for Eugene I went endangering my four bones, a lad that was fit to singe the hair off my head in the glen but for the way I acted frightening him with the stick, and I letting on to be lepping with bravery and murder, though well knowing if it came to a who shall between us he could eat me alive, glory be to God !

ELLEN. 'Twas a good sign of him as ready as he softened, Malachi, under the power of the saintly poetry.

MALACHI. Isn't women fools ! I'm telling you the prayers and the singing only gave him the excuse to come off his big horse with dignity, but, believe you me, it's delighted I was yourself and Eileen gave him the excuse with the screeching. Oh, the proud swaggering boy ! Oh my ! what little scruple was on him to leave me shivering in a bruised cripple, all for my spying for his good, giving him the chance to vent the bad stuff was choking his gullet because he lepped into a scorth of briars in a sudden instead of showing himself off a flaming hero in the eyes of the men of Meenanaar.

ELLEN. Don't be harsh with him, Malachi, because of that little scuffle. He is fond of you, and when you're dead I'll warrant 'tis Eugene will have many a mass said for the benefit of your soul in purgatory.

MALACHI (*ironically*). He will, I'm thinking ! As little I expect from him as from his father, Peter Guerin, that can't have the second bottle of porter taken without alluding to me, insulting, as the model of a gombeen man ; though it wasn't too stiff I was with Peter the time I gave him up the farm with yourself and I in the last link with the wheezing and the bronchitis ; a man moreover I was the means of

shaping into a prosperous farmer by the power of the brain in my head.

ELLEN. Time will tell if Eugene don't be a good head to you in the heel of your days.

MALACHI. I'm telling you it's a big fool I am to be working wonders in this place for the benefit of one or either. Eugene will be grateful ! He will be like Peter the time I took all the trouble to wheedle him into taking the rentwarnership and he dragged, and all the trouble I took to keep him in it a few years itself, he chafing against it and ashamed ; meantime I had to be telling big lies to the agent that the reason he wouldn't attend eviction was because you were too national in yourself, moryah ! And when he flung it up in the finish, he starts cursing me for my zeal and my ingenuity, and he rearing again against the Cantillons. That's the way I do be thanked for all I ever done, no profit to myself, and no honour for me or the like of me among the people—an old single bachelor stuck in the corner.

ELLEN. Malachi, for God's sake ! sure Peter is Peter, but Eugene is Eugene.

MALACHI. A big fool I am, a damn sight a bigger fool than the like of you could comprehend ; and sore was I pondering on my foolishness and I sloping hither from the Great House. But this matchmaking over, never more will you catch Malachi Cantillon torment his old carcass by putting one foot across another for man, woman, or child. I'll call in by degrees all the money's due to me and put it safe in the bank. I'll go trading in a few dry heifers for myself, and I won't get up before ten o'clock a morning in the week.

ELLEN. We both want a rest, Malachi, and we out of the bunk every day these forty years what time the ducks let the first quack in the small drain outside the door. And I'll

sleep it out many a morning surely, in comfort for myself, if all goes well with poor Eugene.

[BIG WILLIAM appears outside half-door.]

MALACHI (*turning round*). Is it you that's in it, Big William Cantillon ?

BIG WILLIAM (*fumbling with bolt*). Who the dickens would it be but me ? What the devil hold has this bolt at all ? (*Slips back bolt and bounds in.*) Malachi, 'tis me, not Pringle, must have the Lucys' land ! Hell to you that put me off taking it the time you did, you versed and cunning old fairy ! for now the land is gone from me if I don't have the money to send the landlord that's on the drag, and must get the ready cash the same as he got it by evicting the Horans for a half year's rent and not allowing them to sell their interest. I want a hundred pound !

MALACHI. Begone, Big William ! Is it coming here you are before the people, rising ructions, and maybe putting impediments to the marrying of Eugene ? Begone ! for there's them has sworn you'll fall the hour you grab the Lucys' land.

BIG WILLIAM (*making a noise with his fingers*). That much for all the moonlighters from here to Ballydehob while there's a revolver in my pocket and peelers at my heels !

ELLEN (*turns round from looking out window*). Begone, Big William Cantillon ! The matchmakers are moving near, and Eugene and Tom is talking to the girls near the sallies. Begone, or Eugene will lep the steeple !

BIG WILLIAM (*catching MALACHI by coat lapels*). Listen to me ! I must have that hundred pound ! God above ! if you knew the horrible fright came on me—coming from town—at the first glimpse I got of the big bush on the height that shows the Lucys' farm sloping away to the east. "Murt Pringle has taken it" rattled in my throat. I beat the horse to

a foaming sweat, and galloping like the devil for three miles I never drew bridle till I reached the boreen. Out of the car I lepped and across the bounds ditch, the eyes flying out of my head looking to see if Pringle was walking the farm. Down with me to the river half mad, and, Lord ! when I saw the rich brown bank above the water and the soft green grass waving over the verge, I was fit to eat my fill of that lovely earth and that lovely grass, Malachi Cantillon.

MALACHI (*freeing himself*). You'd be as well employed talking to that stone wall as to me. Be off, I'm telling you !

BIG WILLIAM (*catching MALACHI*). Are you a brother at all, you gombeen hag ? Look at the way I was screeching all night in my sleep, and I having every nightmare Pringle had the land. My son John is as bad. At break of day he lepped out in the middle of the floor : "Take that land, father," said he, "and don't be cowarded by no man." But I want a hundred pound !

MALACHI. You'll not get a hundred farthings !

BIG WILLIAM. I'll out in the field and roar ! I'll start murder with the high clipper of nationality, Eugene !

ELLEN. You outrageous villain ! Lend it to him, Malachi, lend him the hundred pound !

MALACHI. I'll not lend him the price of a box of matches.

BIG WILLIAM. You'll be well secured. Here's the note, my name to it, John's name to it, and I'll guarantee the transaction will be a secret, and the grabbing won't be public till after the marrying of Eugene. Will that do ?

MALACHI. 'Twill not do.

BIG WILLIAM. Is it forcing me you are to go over the hills craving to Gombeen Roche, and giving him the interest ? Mightn't you as well have the big interest ?

MALACHI. How much interest?

BIG WILLIAM. Big interest. (*Pause.*) Great interest. (*Pause.*) As big as you ask it, Malachi Cantillon.

MALACHI. The devil carry you ! here's the money ; and now away with you in the shelter of the ditches while I go down to them that's walking the land. [Goes out.]

BIG WILLIAM (*going out*). Like the wind I came and like the wind I'll go. Depend on me not to be seen, though there's a thing swelling in my chest this moment makes me feel the size of an elephant. For, Christ above ! I'll have the Lucy's land. [Goes out. Re-enter MALACHI, hurriedly.]

MALACHI. I'm betrayed to Captain Moonlight—there's Teig Wren sneaking away from the direction of Meenanaar, and 'tis Big William he seen itself turning the corner of the triangle. I'll be crucified if it isn't Eileen they'll massacre in the villainy of revenge. (*Going rapidly about kitchen.*) It's in a terrible fix I am entirely ; it's in a terrible fix I am entirely. [EILEEN comes down from room.]

ELLEN. It had to be. In a terrible fix, and is there no help for it ?

MALACHI. No help, but let come what will. Many a slip I made and I a youngster sliding on the ice, but I never came once on my poll, though the cutest I ever seen would come on their poll soon or late. Many a slip I made since in my way of life and never came on my poll likewise, but I'm thinking I have come on my poll in the heel, Ellen Cantillon.

[Goes out.]

ELLEN. We're done tay, Eileen, and to have Malachi give way. Up in the room with you and be praying, and I'll be making a shape to be praying. Up in the room ; 'tis in no humour I am now to be parrying quizz-talk with these sporting females walking into us, Breeda Carmody and Maura Driscoll.

[ELLEN and EILEEN go into room. Enter BREEDA CARMODY and MAURA DRISCOLL.

BREEDA (*standing at threshold and looking out*). I declare, Maura Driscoll, they are going on again with their whispering and their capers. Isn't it a scandal the way they are grigging us with their mysteries? I wished . . . Did you cover what Eugene said the time himself and Tom drew back letting on to be lighting their pipes at the whitehorn?

MAURA (*sitting down*). I heard that laugh from Tom surely, and was it "Whisht, Eugene" he said, putting his hand over Eugene's mouth?

BREEDA. That was after. Didn't you hear Eugene's loud whisper about slipping away from the matchmaking at a certain hour, and about some two guns himself and Tom have hid in the bench of hay?

MAURA. I have a buzzing in my ear with a week.

BREEDA. They're like two thieves planning. They're clever if they aren't in earnest. (*Comes in and goes to window.*) We'll see if the four guns are here that Luke the moonlighter hid behind the shutter. Two is absent, Maura. (*Closes shutter.*) They must be up to some wonderful prank, surely. I'll put back the clock an hour for sport.

[*Takes clock and puts back hands.*

MAURA. I'd be chary of interfering with it, Breeda.

BREEDA. Why are they tormenting me with their mysteries? You'd remain mute under every abuse, you're so quiet and meek in yourself always, and it's a show the way you're in love. (*Puts down clock.*) Is it mournful you are again? I declare you're worse than your ma itself, for she keeps moving and gives her brooding vent in speech. You're always sighing and always melancholy. Times you nearly give me the peuk, for maybe 'tis me with all my capers will meet a right misfortune before my day is done.

MAURA. I'd be smiling if I knew what you were up to starting tricks with the lads ; but there's a dread in my heart you're thinking again of Eugene.

BREEDA (*musingly*). Eugene is turning out a gay man surely in the heel.

MAURA (*rising*). Tom is double as gay, Breeda. Stick to him now in the name of God, and leave me Eugene !

BREEDA. Be civil or I mightn't, for Tom isn't half the game he used to be.

MAURA. I never seen the match of you, a lively person, having such fancy for a man of game. Isn't it the like of me they do be saying that should be having that canter ; and there, I'd like my man to be sensible and sober and doing his work for himself ! In course I wouldn't object to his taking a couple of bottles extra when he'd be out at a fair.

BREEDA. And who said I had a gragh for blue drunkards, Maura Driscoll ? Moreover half the game do be dead in the like of them. And big smokers don't have the speech. Still, a man that can't take a smoke and a drink for himself isn't the thing either, if he gabbles itself. Now, in my opinion, Dandy Tobin that wears the high collars was never a right man of game. He could surely give fool-talk to a barsmaid for the two longest hours a clock ever struck, but let him take one smoke and he was levelled in a heap as weak as a dishcloth—a green corpse and he retching out his lights and his livers !

MAURA. It's the way you don't know what you want, Breeda Carmody, in the shape of a man.

BREEDA. Maybe I don't, Mary saint-eye. If I did itself I'm thinking I'd search through the four corners of the globe for him and come back with but a Flemish account of his whereabouts.

MAURA. The Lord free your heart of its surfeit of fancies !

(Enter EUGENE and TOM unperceived.) I wished you'd be satisfied with Tom.

BREEDA. Wasn't I doting for months? For a while 'twas great sport. (Sighs.) I'm fond of him still, I suppose, in a way. Howbe, of late, moreover, when he's absent for a bit I'd be ashamed to tell the way I cool. And then I do be that disappointed and sour and discontented in myself I yawns and I yawns, I don't know . . .

[Yawns. TOM catches her suddenly from behind.

TOM. Is this what you're saying now after all that passed between us, Breeda Carmody? Is this what you're saying, you that swore that of all the fancies you ever had only one had a foundation in your heart?

BREEDA (*trying to free herself*). Let me go, Tom Driscoll. Let me go, will you!

TOM. No, till I shame you now. And wouldn't it be a fitting thing to shame you before the world for a versed false thing, and it less than four weeks itself since you were alluding to our crowning day the time you stood between the two gosedauns and we giving that look at one another? Was there lies in your heart and we talking of it? Was there lies in your heart and we in one word saying the heavens stopped to watch us in that hour, and we knowing the greatest miracle in the world; and was it false you were talking and we comparing ourselves to them that were not pure, and that the stars in the skies would only blacken at the sight of them?

BREEDA. Wasn't it joking I was with Maura now? Don't be taking notice of me—mustn't I be joking till the day I will go into my grave, Tom Driscoll?

MAURA. Isn't Tom smiling, Breeda? Isn't it funning he is, you fooleen? (TOM goes and sits on stool and laughs.) Now, wouldn't you say he was a man of game?

BREEDA (*angrily*). Isn't it the meanest thing the way he

went on? (*To Tom.*) For spite, 'tisn't to you but to Eugene I'll give a suck of the bullseye.

[*Takes sweet out of her mouth and passes it to Eugene.*]

MAURA. I'll be jealous, Eugene. I will, faith, if I don't get a suck of that sweet!

EUGENE (*taking it out of his mouth and giving it to her.*) Here it is, with compliments. I warrant 'twould take a share of Breeda's sweets now to turn my brain or a share of her coaxing glances. She had me once surely, the day she came over the strap, a corner of her bib in one eye, she weeping, moryah! and the other little eye dancing and lepping inside in her head.

BREEDA (*facing him*). Aren't you big in yourself? 'Tis little would pinch me to give you one look that would make your heart go clouting like a clock!

TOM (*rising*). I must have the sweet, Maura. 'Twouldn't be a lucky thing if I hadn't the last suck out of it and it after coming out of Breeda's mouth.

MAURA. You can't, Tom. God forgive me, it slipped down my throat unbeknownst!

BREEDA. A bad sign if I was trusting to one bullseye. (*Takes sweet from pocket and gives it to Tom.*) Put that in your mouth and don't be troubling over small things—a habit would wear every screed of flesh down off your carcass in a manner that you wouldn't be the size of a wren in a week! Wouldn't I hate the sight of you with a sickly grey colour on your face and ugly bones pointing through your cheeks? We'll sit down for ourselves and we'll have a chat.

[*TOM and BREEDA sit down on same chair.*]

MAURA. Wouldn't we do the same, Eugene?

[*They sit down. Then an awkward silence.*]

BREEDA. Where's all the talk gone?

EUGENE. Where's all your talk gone ?

TOM. I'm drowsy.

BREEDA. I'll put my head on your shoulder and we'll let on to be asleep before the old men.

MAURA. We'll do the same, Eugene.

[They seem to go to sleep.]

BREEDA (*rising, and going to MAURA*). Tom's asleep.

MAURA. Eugene is snoring.

BREEDA. The way they are they hadn't a wink last night, whatever they were after. Maybe you saw the look they gave at the clock and a look at each other like they'd be thinking they'd have time for a little doze for themselves ? There'll be fun if they don't wake. Lord, here's the old men !

[Runs and sits down by TOM. Enter PETER GUERIN, MALACHI CANTILLON, LUKE CARMODY, and MORGAN DRISCOLL. ELLEN and EILEEN come down from room.]

MALACHI. Four hundred and fifty would be but the miserable fortune to bring into this farm.

MORGAN. Wouldn't I freely give five hundred and fifty if it was there, Malachi Cantillon ? Indeed, it puts me to the pin of my collar to make up the four hundred itself.

PETER. Isn't my word given that the match is made at four hundred, Morgan Driscoll ? Don't be referring to the money again, Malachi Cantillon.

LUKE. Hear, hear ! well it becomes Peter Guerin to act the man ; well it becomes him not to be splitting parables over a trifle of fifty pound. To hell with it for dirty money ! I wished we could do without it entirely.

MALACHI (*sardonically*). Ah, then, 'tis you have the natural hatred against the feel of a banknote in your fist, or that noise a gold sovereign makes, Luke Carmody.

MORGAN (*laughing loudly*). I declare to my God, the lads are asleep ! And the women ! [Laughs again.]

MALACHI. Women is like cats ; they sleeps when they like and they wakes when they like.

LUKE. A deal of knowledge you have of the way women sleeps, you old single badger of sixty !

MORGAN. In a sense I'd say Malachi has truth, Luke Carmody. Leastways I'd say women sleeps generally with one eye open, Luke Carmody. [Laughs loudly.]

ELLEN. There's tormented women find it hard to close the one eye itself, Morgan Driscoll.

[She gives them refreshments.]

LUKE (*taking a drink and looking at the sleepers*). Isn't it a heavy sleep is on them, glory be to God ! There's no sleep but the sleep of youth, I'm saying.

MALACHI (*going to EILEEN*). Did they kiss opposite you ?

LUKE. What harm would it do her if they did ? Don't answer him, Eileen. Leave him dull of it for a sanctimonious old gombeen man. And they going to be married, I wouldn't begrudge them to be kissing while they could hold at it.

[Sings.]

Ho ro, the countryman, the countryman, the countryman,
Ho ro, the countryman would keep . . .

MALACHI (*fiercely*). Will you stop ? Is it bawdy songs you'd be singing before Eileen ?

LUKE. What is Eileen but a woman if it comes to that ?

MORGAN. I'd say Malachi is in order, Luke Carmody. I would say surely that a man shouldn't use bawdy expressions before a female, leastways before a female till she'd be falling a little into the age I'd say, Luke Carmody. (Laughs loudly.) Sing a suitable song, and we'll all sing a song to make a night of it. If I had another glass wouldn't I sing till morning as I often done before ! [Laughs again.]

LUKE. Chorus me. (*He sings part of "The Farmer's Boy."*) Chorus. BREEDA crosses floor and joins in the singing. While LUKE has been finishing verse MORGAN has been humming to himself.) Is it something lonesome is troubling you ?

MORGAN. I'm going to sing, faith. [Sings.

What will you do, love, when I am going,
With white sails flowing, the seas beyond, etc.

[Falls back off stool laughing uproariously.

PETER raises him and drags him on to middle
of floor.

PETER. 'Tis Colonel Burke's dream I'll be singing for you, Colonel Burke the Fenian. God be with him, and God be with all the men of '67 !

ELLEN. 'Tis time you gave over shouting of that '67, Peter Guerin. You'd be fighting with your child, and you showing him a bad example every time you do be on the batter.

PETER. Don't be talking ! But for a few, all were heroes and true patriots in the year '67. Come, Morgan Driscoll, we'll do the Fenian step, and I'll sing you that song a hero composed.

[Sings, and marches up and down floor, holding
MORGAN'S hand. Shouts heard outside.

MALACHI. It's the moonlighters, God above !

PETER. The moonlighters ?

TOM (*suddenly waking up*). The moonlighters, Eugene, the moonlighters, and we have missed our meeting !

[Enter SYNAN, QUIRKE, LUCY, COSDEE, and
other moonlighters, all armed.

COSDEE. Take a peep at your chosen men now, Captain Synan ! Courting they are, the jacky-the-boxes ! Isn't it

Michaeleen Cosdee knew the miserable cowardly stuff was in their gizzards, though Michaeleen would get no hearing ? .

SYNAN. Ay, let me look at the traitors ! Isn't it a terrible thing the like of them should be mingled with the men of Meenanaar ? Eugene Guerin and Tom Driscoll, I brand you before the world as traitors to the Cause !

TOM (*rushing forward to SYNAN*). Sleep overcame me, and forgive me, Captain ! I am no traitor, and I am ready for the fray !

SYNAN. Had you knowledge that Malachi Cantillon had informed on the men of Meenanaar but for a friend being handy that put the fear of God into his paid messenger, old Deb with the crooked eye ?

TOM. No more than the dead do I know what Malachi done, and I'm thinking Eugene can swear the same.

SYNAN. I hear no word from Eugene Guerin. Eugene Guerin, are you ready and willing to face the guns of the Great House ?

EUGENE (*taking a step forward*). I am surely, Captain Synan !

MAURA (*rising*). Is my brother Tom sufficient for you, Captain Moonlight ? Take Tom and, for the love of God, leave me Eugene !

PETER (*going between SYNAN and EUGENE. He catches EUGENE and flings him back*). Scamp of the world, what'll I do to you ? Scamp of the world, is it leaving my house you would be to go murdering innocent people sleeping in their beds ? But—my disgrace !—you're a son of mine, and you'll not dare leave my house to-night while there's one puff of wind left in my body, so help me Christ Almighty !

JAMESIE (*raising stock of gun*). Say but the word, Captain, and, by Jaycus, there's a cake made of his skull !

PETER. Isn't it brave you talk when the peelers aren't

fornenst you, you raging assassin, with the whisky bulging in tears through your ugly red eyes and they flaming inside in your head. But soon the bravery will be cooled in you, and soon the tasby will be flat in you, and you going in a shivering coward to be choked by the hangman's rope. Go along, you naked scamp, and look for the grace of God ! And leave my house, all of you—blackguards, refuse, and dirty murdering moonlighters, leave my house !

JAMESIE (*taking a step forward*). Another syllable against the Cause and, by Jaymony, that face is in snuff ! Give me the word, Captain, for the love of Jesus itself !

LUCY (*facing PETER*). 'Tis me has a word to say to him first, with his comfortable times and his comfortable house and his good bed to lie on for himself. 'Tis he can be alluding to us as dirty murdering moonlighters, for it wasn't Peter Guerin or them belonging to him that were thrown out on the road in the depth of red raw winter to live or die under the frozen canopy of heaven ! 'Tisn't he ever slept with five brothers on a mattress on a cold floor, they pulling the bit of blanket from one another, the cold going through them and the perishing breeze ! 'Tisn't Peter Guerin had to be looking at a well-reared mother and she silent and grieving on a neighbour's hearth ; and 'tisn't he saw a brother and two sisters go down into their graves from the want and the starvation ! O God, be with Timothy and Bridge and Liz this hour ! And (*slapping his chest*) here's the man has gone through all this suffering he'd be calling a dirty murdering moonlighter—a dirty murdering moonlighter, and my land going to be grabbed by Big William Cantillon, and that hound of hell will have the house I was born in and my very heart's blood between the mortar of its stones ! (*Uttering a fiendish scream.*) Ah, if I could only have these fingers around the grabber's throat (*utters another scream*), around his throat

choking him, murdering him ! Ah, wouldn't it be the handsome sight to see his face swelling red and blue, and the big eyeballs lepping out of the sockets ! May Jesus send him in my way till I'll batter the dirty life out of him on the stones, to be screeching with joy and I dancing a jig on his dirty bloody corpse !

[Utters another scream.]

PETER. I am no friend to grabbers, but God forbid I'd have your mind to damn my immortal soul for a bit of land !

LUCY. I would, and forty souls ! Christ, give me one five minutes of hot revenge, and down to the bottom of hell I'll cheerfully go to be damned for ever and ever !

PETER. Mad you are and deluded ; mad ye all are and deluded !

SYNAN (*advancing*). Not mad nor deluded, but true friends of the Cause. 'Tis yourself is deluded, or long since a sign from me had left you by this without a sound bone in your carcass. (*Wheeling about.*) Enough is said, boys of Meenanaar ; the recruits are not guilty ; and there'll be evenings galore to give that wigging to the gombeen man. Let Peter Guerin, that calls us murderers, keep his son ; and Morgan Driscoll, if you're unwilling your son should march with us, keep him likewise.

MORGAN. 'Tis going to be married he is, Morgan Synan.

TOM (*going and mingling with moonlighters at doorway*). The Captain wants me, father, and you shall not stand in the way of the Cause.

PETER. A notion has come to me, Captain of the Moonlighters. (*Pointing at EUGENE.*) If he wants to be a blackguard and murderer, 'tisn't in the power of man to change him. There he is in a heap ; take him—take him, be damned to him, and let him be shot !

SYNAN. Keep him now ; he shall not fight with the boys of Meenanaar, for our principles are as sound and as noble as

ever your principles were, Peter Guerin. Face about, boys ! Be lively and sing ! With jollification we go to our battle, Peter Guerin, as free-hearted and gay as yourself, and you singing the time we came in the door.

[*Moonlighters go out, marching and singing.*

LUKE (*rising*). They mightn't be good or they mightn't be gracious, but there's no denying, Peter Guerin, they are dashing men the boys of Meenanaar. (*Going towards entrance door.*) Sure, but for the moonlighters, where would ourselves and our children be at the mercy of landlords and grabbers, and if the Meenanaar men wallop old Cook they'll be nothing short of being the biggest heroes in the eyes of the people. (*EUGENE rises and goes rapidly into room.*) 'Tis home time, Morgan Driscoll.

MALACHI (*following LUKE*). And I wished you went home minus your apish remarks. 'Tisn't wicked enough Eugene is without your rising him to the moon.

[*MALACHI and LUKE go out arguing, followed by MORGAN.*

BREEDA (*to MAURA, rising*). My father is a sound man, but in points he is a deal a funnier man than yours, Maura Driscoll. (*Throwing her arms out wide.*) Glory ! if there isn't tears running down out of her two eyes in a pure stream ! (*Catching MAURA.*) I'll shake the dickens out of you, I will ! Wouldn't you be the same as me—hearty in myself ? Sure, I thinks it splendid game to see the guns flashing, the lads in high blood, and a rattle like of war all in the air.

[*ELLEN and EUGENE come down from room.*

ELLEN. He says he is going from us, Peter, going for good and all. (*Going on her knees.*) On my knees I beg of you to do one fatherly act, to humble yourself to Eugene and keep our child from straying away in a lone gosling through the fearsome intricacies of the world.

PETER. Whist, woman ! isn't it a free and open world to a young man in health ? He'll be welcome the time he thinks of returning if he has left his blackguarding behind him.

EUGENE (*from doorway*). The grass will be growing to your doorstep before I come back to you—you that has kept me from my part in the work that will be done to-night for the glory of the nation !

PETER (*half-ironically*). Isn't that satisfaction enough for you to know this glorious work will be done for the good of the nation ?

EUGENE (*fiercely*). There is no more to be said between me and you ; but I'll leave you a keepsake to bear me in mind when I am far from home—I leave you my curse !

[*Exit EUGENE followed by EILEEN.*

BREEDA (*going towards entrance door with MAURA*). Isn't he a bold devil and to curse his father ! He is double as bold as Tom—he is pure game itself, though I admit 'twasn't manners of him not to wish you good-bye.

MAURA. Another thing is troubling me worse : there's a pain running from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, Breeda Carmody, for it's remorseful I am why I told the Captain to take Tom.

BREEDA. It hadn't the black of your nail of an effect, so don't be snuffling, my lady sigh-all-day.

MAURA. If it hadn't an effect itself, I said to Captain Moonlight, said I, "Take Tom."

[*Exeunt MAURA and BREEDA. Re-enter MALACHI.*

MALACHI. There is a black form facing the river and it going through the high ferns in the inch. It couldn't be Eugene ?

ELLEN. The identical man—wild and raging ! And indeed, Malachi, 'tisn't a soft word that came out of Peter's mouth to cool him, but arguments and cross-talk ; sure, he

didn't wish for better fun to get shut so nice and handy of poor innocent Eugene.

MALACHI (*fiercely, facing PETER*). I have something to say in the finishing of the story, Peter Guerin. Come now and talk to me, you man of capers ! First and foremost get shut of the notion it was for Eugene's benefit I went matchmaking and endangering my four bones. 'Twas not, but a terror in my heart Eileen would lose her fortune if you took the fit to send to America for Luke and that damsel he picked up from the lower counties. You blush !—ah ! wasn't it well I knew the thought was brewing in your brain, for you are fonder of Luke than all you ever reared ; and big as your rage was against his moonlighting, 'tis you that keeps them in good order, snug and cosy in red flannel for themselves, the loaded guns he left behind the shutters. You banged him in your fury, but many a time you'd have sent for him but for the shame of going against your principles before the people. But you are thinking of sending for him in the heel, and answer me now, you man of capers !

PETER. I have done my duty by Eugene. Though he joined the moonlighters itself, I wouldn't have broken the match if he stayed. So help me, that was my intention, and it was doing far more than my duty by Eugene.

MALACHI. If it was, 'tis against the grain you were doing it.

PETER (*rising suddenly*). Then so much the greater should be my praise, Malachi Cantillon. (*Raising clenched fist over table.*) And now let me tell you straight out from the shoulder that it don't signify a pinch of snuff to me what you think, or what the people will think, or what the nation will think—so help my God, I'll send for Luke !

[*Bangs fist on table.* Re-enter EILEEN.]

EILEEN. He has carried the gun with him over the river,

The Moonlighter

III

Eugene ! I seen him to pull it out of the reek of hay. He cocked it, and he put it to his shoulder, and he pointed and he gaged with it, and up and down he waved it, and to and fro and hither and over. I coughed, and he shoved the stock of it under his coat, and gave the most fearsome yell was ever heard and the most awful look was ever seen on the face of a Christian. "And now, who'll stop me on the path of glory," he screeched, "for I'll be the volunteer," said he, "I'll be the volunteer !" A word wouldn't come out of my lips and they glued, for I frightened, mother. I frightened !

ELLEN (*clapping her hands*). Holy murder and bloody war—he's off to slaughter his uncle, Big William Cantillon !

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

SCENE.—*Interior of PETER GUERIN'S kitchen.* PETER
is sitting at fire. Enter ELLEN.

ELLEN. There is a crick in my neck and pains in my two eyes from the way I am gazing and gaping towards the east. That way Eugene should be making his appearance, for he said in the letter he'd be coming through Inchibane—the place he tarried in for a while before his wanderings took him to the big city.

PETER (*sarcastically*). He'll be here in good time, I'll engage.

ELLEN. I hope the dusk won't overtake him on his journey, Peter.

PETER. If it does itself he hasn't forgotten the landmarks in the space of a twelvemonth. He'd make his way in a night as black as pitch, I warrant he would, and come in a fly as straight and as sure as a pigeon, Ellen Cantillon.

ELLEN. 'Twould be more cheery for him to be coming while the warm sun is shining in the sky, Peter. I coaxed the old reuk cow out on to the kiln-field in order that he'd have a view of her the minute he'd come over the brow. There she is lying now, and she chewing the cud for herself. And then he'd be seeing the little homely windows through the trees and the old pump outside the door.

PETER (*sarcastically as before*). He'll arrive in high glee, surely.

ELLEN. I wished, Peter, you had a warmer welcome in your heart before him, and I wished you'd wear a smile. If moonlighting thoughts are brewing in him still itself, it need never more enrage the two of ye to the point of blows, for isn't the organisation broken up, and the moonlighters all scattered from Meenanaar? All he can do for the future is talk.

PETER. He'll get his shake-hands, and he'll get his welcome. And better than either, won't he be getting the land?

ELLEN (*taking up teapot from hearth*). God in His justice willed he should have the farm, I'm thinking. 'Tis a scruple if he isn't in before the tea is too boiled. (*Pouring a little on saucer.*) Isn't it purple coming out of the spout, Peter? 'Tis like wine, and no wonder, for we never pay less than three and eightpence a pound. (*Puts teapot back on hearth and goes to table.*) I'll engage he'll like this butter, Peter. I didn't trust the girl to look after it, and 'twas myself that mixed the saffron and the peckle and the saltpetre. It's my intention to keep the baked goose and the punch for supper. In the making of that loaf there didn't go as much as a tint of milk, but the finest thick sour cream out of the tub. A plate of larded dough-nuts I have likewise for him, warm in the oven, very luscious and as brittle as ashes. And then there is that apple-pie.

PETER. There is some clatter out in the bane.

ELLEN (*in excitement, looking out window*). 'Tis Eugene—'tis not, 'tis Malachi!

[Enter MALACHI, carrying a rusty gun.

MALACHI. Eugene's carabine I'm after meeting with on the back of a furze ditch. Poking I was for porcupines and

I to hit up against it. I wouldn't praise my task to be clearing that rust off it, and it lying on an earthy place since the time he went away. The two charges are in it, for there's caps on the nipples ; but, I'm thinking, if there is life in that powder still, 'tisn't one way it would fly if a man pulled the trigger, but might take a gallant notion to blow the shooter himself, body and sleeves, into eternity.

ELLEN. You never brought me a more welcome present, Malachi, for if it wasn't Eugene that massacred Big William itself, it never left my head what he might be doing with that deadly carabine, though you would be consoling me and you saying if the real red murdering heart was in him 'tisn't his father could have stopped him, the time the Captain spoke to him in that voice, and he calling on him was he ready for the battle. Oh, my heart is bubbling at the sight of that woful engine, rusted and ruined and innocent of the precious blood of man !

PETER (*sharply*). Take the thing away, and be damned to it !

ELLEN. My heart is bubbling. We are in the heel of our days, and it must be the Lord in His mercy is thinking of relenting towards us and lifting from us the heavy hand that kept our noses to the ground and broke the melt in us so long. Flaming years have passed over our heads, and we have brought our scars out of the raging battling times, but there is a quietness all around, and now at last, maybe, there is opening before us a little while of joy. 'Tisn't me should be confident, Malachi, still, there is throbbing in my bosom the warmest hope we'll all rise contented at to-morrow's dawn, calm and rational for ourselves, without the pains of villainous torments darting through our eyeballs, and we blinking out at the sky of heaven and the fields so green.

PETER (*morosely, half-rising*). Take that thing away, I'm saying !

ELLEN. Hide it in some secluded place, Malachi ; the sight of it now might disturb Eugene.

MALACHI (*goes and places gun behind dresser*). 'Twill come in no one's way behind the dresser ; some poacher might be found to give a few shillings for it, or a dealer in old iron.

ELLEN. He will never discover it there ; and I'm thinking, Peter; 'twould be safer you'd burn them few lines you had from Luke giving you the refuse to come home to the land. For we must leave Eugene dull of it that you ever wrote for Luke. Some notion might come to him you had a natural hatred against himself, and then maybe 'tis the grief would swell in his bosom, and again he might leave us and for evermore.

PETER (*taking letter out of side coat-pocket*). 'Tis thin and seldom a letter ever came from Luke. And I'll not make ashes of this, though it's short and bitter surely. (*Reading letter.*) "No, father," says he in the finish, "'tisn't in your power to bring me back the same as you drove me away. It's in a big city I am of a great free country, and it's a rousing life I lead. There is a future before me, I promise you, and it don't signify now whether you'd let me be a moonlighter or no ; though it's the same hatred I have against the landlords and the English, and the same love for the old sod I'll likely see no more." (*Folds up letter and puts it back in pocket.*) Wasn't I raving not to expect that answer, and the pride of the world in Luke ? It's the same answer I would make myself, I'm thinking. The letter will be secure enough in this pocket from the eyes of Eugene.

ELLEN (*turning round at door*). He is coming ! He made one spring off the ditch, and down the path-field he is coming ! He gives a toss with every step, and it's a gay and frisky appearance is on him, thank God ! (*Going towards hearth.*)

'Twould delight your heart to see him, and he whistling for himself, Malachi. I'll take up the dough-nuts.

MALACHI (*at door*). He is after meeting with Poet O'Rourke on the path, and I'd wager it's a flourishing account the same poet is now giving Eugene of all that took place during the time he was abroad.

ELLEN (*putting dough-nuts back in oven*). It's far in a way too soople that poet is with his tongue, varnishing into wonders what would happen at a fair. That we mightn't have an hour's luck of himself and his capers, they are lost and gone now, all the days I gave under heavy pondering how to deal out in dribs and drabs the newses to Eugene, making a common event of what was doleful, with phrases of Christianity ready that I picked out of that holy book, *The Key of Heaven*.

MALACHI. He is pointing towards the west. I hear the words. He is talking of the murder at the Great House ; the way the Captain fell and Jamesie Quirke ; how the brains of young Cook was scattered against the dry wall, and he striving to save his life by skelping out the back-yard. (*Short pause.*) There is a shout for you, and the poet lepping ! Relating he is now of that battle between Big William and Morisheen Lucy. Listen to him describing the way they clawed one another like tigers and they going through the brambles ; Big William growling and blowing, and Morisheen screeching like a born devil, a pure maniac, skinning his teeth, and steel flying out of his eyes at the thought Big William would overcome him.

ELLEN. The poet, he is now running down to the bushes !

MALACHI. Showing Eugene the spot where the struggle ended, when Morisheen got the knife at last into Big William's entrails, and all the blood was in him came splashing on the

green. The poet is laughing now : alluding he is surely to the death Martin Driscoll met with, Martin the Fenian, and he to fall out of a rail coming drunk from town. The poet is making a joke of the way Martin went off, roaring like a mad bull and damning the Queen of England.

ELLEN. He'll upset my child ; he'll upset Eugene. The rascal, he couldn't renayge referring to Tom's uncle itself, a regular devil. God forgive me for reflecting on the dead, but Martin Driscoll was a show with his nationality ! He was very bitter entirely, Martin was.

PETER. He was very steadfast.

MALACHI. They are like they would be whispering now. It might be the trouble that's on Tom Driscoll the poet is speaking of. He might be lowering the voice because of the big friends they were, Tom and Eugene.

ELLEN. That will pierce him the worst of all. 'Twill madden him to the moon itself that Michaeleen Cosdee has turned Queen's Evidence, and that Tom is on the run for the murder of Sylvester Cook. Now I am sorry, though before I was joyful, at what Eugene said in his letter of never hearing a word of the doings at home. It's coming on him too suddenly entirely, and it's in a tremble I'll be till I know which or whether what way he is at all.

MALACHI. It might be of Tom the poet is talking, and it mightn't. If it is or it isn't he won't forget Maura Driscoll has lost her senses, and he'll surely mention what happened to Eileen.

ELLEN. Don't be thinking of her at all, in the name of God ! or it's miserable-looking you would be in the face before Eugene. He'll be down-hearted, and we must be cheering him and soaping him. Sure, no one can tell you better than yourself how best to behave on every occasion, Malachi. Myself, I'll be as gay as a gadabout, and I'll rub my two

cheeks near the fire in a manner there will be a shine on them like a new shilling.

[Enter LUKE CARMODY.]

LUKE. God bless, Peter Guerin ! 'Tisn't Luke Carmody the strong farmer you see now fornenst you, my honest man, but a crawling, sneaking beggar you see fornenst you. I never before went begging to no man, and it's queer and frizzled up I feel in myself entirely. What I'm alluding to—there's a big favour I'm going to ask of the people of this house—to wit, if they'd be agreeable to patch up that match between Breeda and Eugene. I'll get the refuse, I suppose ?

MALACHI. And wouldn't it be the price of you, Luke Carmody ? Ah, now my turn is come if I wanted to show my teeth.

LUKE (*going to door*). That settles it. No harm done. I can humble myself a share, but I'd rather die decent than humble myself too much. (*Turning round.*) Howbe, I'll make one remark before I wish good-bye : have no mercy on me if the thing I ask doesn't concern the happiness of Eugene.

ELLEN. Malachi, the happiness of Eugene ! Why shouldn't we make the match, Mr. Carmody ? I see no impediments. Breeda has turned against Tom ; and if she hadn't itself, it's all overboard in that quarter and he a murderer.

LUKE. There is no more about Tom. 'Tisn't we haven't been sorely grieving for him destroyed in the bloom of his days, and 'tis a scruple to be thinking how soon the fine warm blood in him will be stopped so frightful sudden in his jugular by that knot, and that his bounding heart must burst inside in him all for to satisfy the law that has no mercy. We are sorry for him, but we can't renayge doing our duty by our daughter. Didn't Father Stebbin, one of the Holy Fathers,

say the time he was here last : " If you were sure the world was coming to an end to-morrow morning," said he, " you must do your duty the same as if you were to live for a thousand years," said he ; " you must do your duty by your son and by your daughter," said he. Whatever happens to others, a man must do his duty by his own.

PETER. No man can point a finger at me as a sympathiser of moonlighters and murderers, still it's no praise I have on Breeda Carmody for the way she acted towards that deluded youth.

LUKE. Thinking him cowardly she is, seeing him sneaking along the hedges, she not knowing 'twas he that murdered Sylvester Cook and has good cause for his crawling. And 'tis only God knows the quandary I'm in with her, Peter Guerin. Seven specially selected young bucks I have brought to the house to her from far and near. " She might and she mightn't " was her canter from start to finish. Deludering me she was, not liking to give point-blank refusals and she seeing me anxious.

ELLEN. 'Tis Eugene she's fond of after all, and she's a good girl.

LUKE (*walking backwards and forwards, his hands under his coat-tails*). 'Tis only me knows the value of her, Ellen Cantillon. Clean and clever, she is all capability. You'd delight to see her go about her work, her heart in it ; 'tisn't like streeleens striving to do one thing and they thinking why didn't they do another thing, sir singles hanging to their tails and dragging the puddle after them. If you paid a hundred pound for it you wouldn't find as much as a speck on the utensils after Breeda, and where she is you could eat your dinner off the floor. Whist ! what was she but eleven years when I gave her up management and handling, but since

that hour there was never a man seen me walk down to Mass of a Sunday morning without my linen shirt on me starched and ironed and it as white as snow.

ELLEN. She is a darling housekeeper, and she'll do finely for Eugene.

LUKE. If the people here but knew her proper, they'd be wilder than myself to make the match. A pleasant thing to have the like of her near you in the last day settling the clothes about you in the bed. And 'tis she has feeling, though 'tisn't slobbery, or bulging out of her eyes and dribbling out of her mouth like it does be with things, and they all the time having a cold stone in the middle of their bosom, and nothing troubling them but their own dirty guts.

ELLEN. 'Tis the way she is, only too good, Mr. Carmody.

LUKE. If she has capers itself, she is more high and noble in her mind than the quality itself, for there isn't a trace in her of the dirty selfishness of big people, and she scorns the ways of the planning female. God forgive me, I'd have small pleasure without her in the hereafter even with the saints in glory itself ! but I enjoys the thought of her sitting on a heavenly forum, and rising up in that fury of hers if a bar went wrong in the fine music they do be making in the high mansions of the Lord.

MALACHI (*rises and walks across floor. Impatiently*). She is good enough ; she is good enough.

LUKE. She will get four hundred pound.

ELLEN. 'Tis fair enough, Peter.

PETER. Settle it between you.

LUKE. Malachi hasn't answered.

ELLEN. Take it as being clinched, Luke Carmody. Malachi won't say nay.

LUKE. I expect an answer if I have his goodwill. If he cares about making the match, 'tis strange he hasn't made

a remark about the money, if it isn't the way he is softened since the death of Eileen.

MALACHI (*turning round*). The figure is four hundred and fifty pound.

LUKE. I'll give it. And if they are willing, let us get them tied within the twenty-fours hours, in the name of God ! for there is a chance Breeda mightn't hear till then that Tom is on the run. She might feel lonesome when it's told to her he is a murderer ; it might move her to put off the marrying with Eugene for a while, and who could prophesy what changes would come in her in a week itself ? Meanwhile away with me to sound her ; and here is Eugene at the foot of the bane.

ELLEN. Talk to him and tell him all. 'Twill warm the heart in him if he has a fondness for her still. (LUKE goes out.) Now, Malachi, I can take up the dough-nuts. (*She takes up dough-nuts and places them on plate on table. Then she takes teapot from hearth. She pours tea into large cup. Puts two spoonfuls of sugar and milk into it. Stirs it noisily. Tastes it. Puts in more sugar, and again stirs it.*) Enter EUGENE. ELLEN *embraces him.*) Eugene ! (He shakes hands with MALACHI and PETER.) Now, Eugene, let not a syllable leave your mouth till you have eaten your fill. Here, fall to your wholesome lush ! Come, fall to and stuff ! no fear these eatables will pinch your lights or livers or twist a knot in your guts !

[*He sits down.*

EUGENE (*eating*). An empty stomach needs small coaxing, mother dear. Famished I am and ravenous, and only in dread I'll make a beast of myself entirely.

ELLEN. O happy day, to see you letting the big bites down ! O happy day, to see you feeding lively like the time you were a garsoon with your gobble and sup and skelp away ! God bless you, darling boy, it's the same joyful

appearance is on you as was the time before you turned contrairy !

EUGENE. I'll be contrairy no more, I warrant you. That was a flight of another day, and it is over. And now I am happy and safe on this cool hearth that's all our own. (*To PETER.*) But 'tis to you, father, I am beholden that stopped me in my folly, and the way the bad work went on at the Great House. You that were the means of preventing me from doing some woful deed that would wither me in my prime, and even, if it wasn't discovered itself, would make my legs go bending under me all my days, and prison all the years that were before me.

ELLEN. The grace of God has fallen on Eugene !

EUGENE. In glee I was thinking how rejoiced you would be to see the change has come over me ; and burning I was with impatience to tell of it, and I coming marching home-wards through the rich meadows and level pastures of sweet Inchibane. In the big city came the inspiration, when all of a sudden it appeared to me the foolishest thing for a man to be lamenting for the glorious days of yore ; for the people in them times had their day, and we must have our own.

ELLEN. Wasn't that a wonderful thought, Malachi ?

MALACHI. A remarkable thought itself.

ELLEN. What would you be saying, Peter ?

PETER. Malachi has said it.

EUGENE. Likewise did it seem to me the foolishest thing for a man to be grieving over the misfortunes of his country, such as the breakdown of the nation, the old traditions dying, and the people leaving it ; tormenting himself to the brink of the grave over what had to be instead of enjoying himself in the flower of his youth.

ELLEN. Well, Malachi, isn't that almighty shrewd ?

MALACHI. It couldn't be beat.

ELLEN. Peter ?

PETER. As Malachi says.

EUGENE. I smiled at the thought of flightsome creatures running their necks into halters all careless in their fury ; for at last I seen that glory was nothing short of the biggest sham, and one day of life under the warm sun of heaven worth a thousand years of fame and a man rotten in the grave.

ELLEN. Malachi, isn't that all sense ?

MALACHI. It is the essence of wisdom.

ELLEN. Peter ?

[*He points at MALACHI.*

EUGENE. In course I will always be a national man, and 'tis no sympathy I have for an informer like Michaeleen Cosdee ; but it is sufficient to give a shilling or a vote where requisite to help the cause. To go further, to endanger one's skin, is the height of lunacy, for a man is all the world to himself.

ELLEN. Ha-hah ! Malachi, isn't that the essence of wisdom ?

MALACHI. I believe you.

[*She turns and looks at PETER, but says nothing.*

EUGENE. 'Twas then the thoughts of home did come to me ; I smothered thinking of the fresh blowing breezes. A shiver would come on me every time I'd see little wisps of clerks panting and losing the breath and they hopping along to their musty holes in the morning. The great majority you'd see bald before their time, little fairies as grey as the hills, and their cheeks the colour of the blossom of the furze.

ELLEN. The bad air and the confined life : thank God you came home in time !

EUGENE. Sick of the sight of them I was ; and 'twas worse at night to be seeing all the fuzzy-wuzzy females on the prowl ; and other things on the trot with jig-acting bucks chasing

after them. And 'twould turn your stomach all the miserable dirty slaves you'd come across with the black porter dribbling out of their mouths, and there is big dwellings has a stench coming out the open door would knock a thoroughbred stallion kicking at sixty yards.

ELLEN. 'Tis lucky you had the constitution and wasn't poisoned.

EUGENE. But one day I said to myself, away with me home ! What am I here but a miserable blackberry in a canful, and away with me to my house and land ! A big farmer I will be with my twenty cows and my pair of horses. I'll be a regular worker, but I'll enjoy myself at fair or market, or on a pattern day. A side-car I will drive. Two fat pigs I'll kill at Christmas, but I'll have fresh meat when it takes my fancy.

ELLEN. Malachi, he will make a fine farmer surely.

EUGENE. I said to myself, a good woman I will choose for a wife. With her I'll live in the healthy country way, and, with the help of God, my children will be about me in the heel, and I'll fall, like an oak tree, in the fulness of my years. Breeda is turning around to me, her father says ; 'tis her I'll select, for the old fondness for her is come back to me as fresh as it was in its early bloom.

[He drinks out of cup, places it back on table, and looks about him.]

ELLEN. We are all happy now. Malachi—Peter—aren't we all happy now ? Peter ? Malachi ? (*She goes to MALACHI.*) Talk, Malachi, talk ! 'Tisn't me can rise in tune with Eugene's rousing strain, I that has to go begging for speech the time I shouldn't go begging, and the Lord for some purpose having sent me into the world with a dull lump of a brain. Talk, Malachi ! Will you talk !

[Catches him by the arm.]

EUGENE. What change has come over him ? And there

is some change in father, and even in yourself a change is visible to me.

ELLEN. 'Tis only in your eye it is, Eugene. No difference in us but whatever wrinkle is added to us or another grey hair, for the age is leaning on us, and the world is unjust.

EUGENE. The way it is, then : Malachi Cantillon has no welcome home for me.

ELLEN (*catching Eugene by arm*). Whist, Eugene ! wasn't it the warm shake-hands he gave you—wasn't delight beaming all over his visage and you walking in the door ?

EUGENE. A forced welcome ! His countenance shows it now, and he having failed to keep up the deception.

ELLEN. Better tell you the truth, Eugene : a sad turn that has mastered him and he after seeing a child's funeral passing on the road. Too lively it brought back to him some remembrance of Eileen.

EUGENE. Wronging him I am, then. (*Pause.*) But if I amn't itself, no strangeness in him shall daunt me now. Though it's like his selfishness to put a damper on me in my high joy, moreover after Eileen getting that happy death entirely. God rest her soul !

MALACHI. My fault surely. 'Tis true she got the happiest death—the happiest death I ever seen. Like the candle she went, and it shoving near the break of day. 'Twas on a frosty morning, too. "Don't be charging too much interest, Uncle Malachi," says she to me a while before. "And 'tis a national man I'd like you to be, but not to be committing crimes in course," says she, and she making a little frown. The creature ! 'twas many a time she strove to make a national man of me, and she always in dread I was more than half a Tory.

EUGENE. We will be talking about her.

MALACHI. She was humorous even at the point of death,

and she whispering she'd make interest with Saint Peter to let me in before my time was due out of Purgatory. "I will surely make influence with him," says she, "to open for you the golden gates of Paradise—(*shaking his head*)—the golden gates of Paradise."

EUGENE. We'll have many a long talk about her, Malachi Cantillon, and I'll be consoling you when I'm settled down.

MALACHI (*bitterly*). That will be the time. (*In his usual tone.*) And I will be showing you the fine stone I put over her head. Big money I paid for it, and 'tis likely I was overcharged and I not knowing the value of them things. But there isn't a lovelier stone in the graveyard. "Sacred to the Memory of Eileen Guerin," is on it—"Sacred to the Memory of Eileen Guerin, who departed this life the 4th December 1889. Aged sixteen years. Sweet Jesus, have mercy." That's all that's on it.

EUGENE. Nice and respectable as it should be. A week won't pass before the two of us will take a ramble to the church.

MALACHI. We will. Many is the time I strolled there by myself in the heel of the day. I was never a shy man by night, but often I felt lonesome in the darkness and I looking about me at the graves. But at last I began to think of myself and my foolish dread, for sure it's the peacefullest place in the world, and there isn't a word out of them and they all there together, the quality and the commonality, the grabbers and them their land was grabbed, all that were tearing and murdering and they above the ground—not a word out of them, and not a whisper will come from them surely until the general judgment day.

ELLEN (*goes and catches MALACHI by arm*). Malachi ! Whist, Malachi ! is there head or tail to you in the heel of the hunt ? Isn't it visible to you the trouble you're causing

poor Eugene, his lower lip hanging, and a frown between the two eyes in him? If I could believe it possible of you, 'tis half raving I would say you were, Malachi Cantillon.

MALACHI (*rising*). Let him not be minding me at all. But I am not ravelling yet, Ellen Cantillon, 'tisn't up to my time. I'll be ravelling when I'm doting. (*Going across floor.*) Then it's straying along the banks of the river I'll be, my lips moving in a sort of a muttering. And the youngsters will be pointing the finger at old Malachi Cantillon, alluding to the time he was the genius of a gombeen man. I'll be smiling to myself, for what does it signify in the heel whether a man is a genius or a fool? (*Sitting down near table.*) 'Twill be all the same in forty years—'twill be all the same in forty years.

[Enter MORGAN, PEG, and MAURA DRISCOLL,
the latter mad.

MORGAN (*going to EUGENE*). We are disturbing you, Mr. Guerin, but a regiment of soldiers wouldn't prevent her walking hither when she heard you had come home. We must humour her, since it has pleased God to afflict her the way she is.

MAURA (*advancing to middle of floor*). God bless all here! God bless the man of the house, God bless the woman of the house, and God bless the cow that calved a Friday! Eugene! (*Gives a little laugh.*) Is it Eugene the patriot? Tom laughed at the way Eugene was rising national. "He will lose the senses," said Tom, "if Ireland don't be free." But I said to Tom—no, to the Captain I spoke—"Take Tom," I said, "take Tom." Ah! it's coming on me again, that pain like a stream of fire running from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot. [Clasps her hands together.

MORGAN (*to MALACHI*). She is wandering again, and that glaze is in her eye. You have your own sorrow, Malachi; you can feel for me. [Sobs. They shake hands.

MAURA (*slowly observing EUGENE*). They say Eugene came home. But I can't be deceived. It is an impostor that's here, and not Eugene. They swept him away to a mysterious place, and he'll return no more. 'Twas on May Eve he was bewitched by Breeda Carmody. A pair of high-heeled boots he wore, and she balancing herself on one leg on a big yellow flower in the marshy place near the well. Pale blue ribbons were in her dark brown hair, her two eyes beaming, and she blowing spells through her fingers. But a jaybird came and pecked her on the nose . . .

MORGAN (*takes her by arm*). Maura, give Eugene the hand. It is Eugene surely.

MAURA (*laughing loudly*). Remark the light boots ! Father, you foolish man, that's the dancing master from Lyracumpane. At one bar of a whistle he'd spin about the floor like a top, sir. Once upon a time—'twas a bonefire night—I played a horn-pipe for him on the concertina. I played "Off she ran with the leg of the duck," fol-de-rol-de-rol-de-rol-di-do ! (*Dances a step. Pause.*) Eugene was the boy I was courting.

[*Sings a verse of "Shuil agrah," then laughs to the air.*

MORGAN. I hear the cows bellowing beyond. They are impatient, for it's milking time.

MAURA. Come away, in the name of God ! The woman is cursed who neglects her cows, for cows is the props of farmers. (*He leads her to door.*) I said to the Captain, "Take Tom."

[*MORGAN leads her out. They both sing another verse of "Shuil agrah" as they disappear.*

PEG. She is his chiefest grief. Half-dazed from watching her, it don't seem to pierce him now the woful day that's fast and sure approaching when a black flag will fly above the jail (*clapping her hands*)—a black flag for my child !

ELLEN (*from doorway*). Morgan and Maura are waiting for

you, my good woman. They are looking back from this side of the gloscha.

PEG. Why should they fly a black flag for my child ? Why shouldn't they think of the long nights he repented of the red crime the Captain made him do, his head on my shoulder, and we sobbing and praying for mercy to the Saviour that died for us on the Cross, and for intercession to the immaculate Mother of God ? Why shouldn't they think of the long months that no one knew of his crime but his own, when a step would bring the fearful whisper to his lips—"The police ; is it the police ? "

ELLEN. He isn't caught yet, and it isn't becoming of you to be flying in the face of God. Didn't the Holy Father warn the people 'twas a dangerous thing to be flying in the face of God ? They are waiting for you at the gloscha, Peg Driscoll.

PEG. 'Tis she delayed him going. But for her he might have been saved and across the seas before Cosdee turned informer. My curse on Breeda Carmody !

ELLEN (*catching her*). Oh no, you can't be cursing her now. Leastways you mustn't be cursing her here. Indeed, don't be cursing her here or there—there's a reason why you shouldn't.

PEG (*as if waking out of a sleep*). Is it cursing her I was ? I cross it again, and I beg pardon of all here. Dazed I am myself to be cursing her, and it all foreshadowed that is coming to be. Dazed I am myself, for isn't the brain stopped from working inside in my head, and no more they do be coming to me now, the forebodings, the tokens, and the dreams. 'Tis the same as if the end of all things was at hand, and I heard around me the crumbling of the world. (*Kneels.*) Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners ! (*Rises.*) Now and at the hour of death ! (*Going out.*) Now and at the hour of death !

[*Goes out.*

EUGENE. I wished they kept their lamentations at home. You'd think it's envying me they were my little pleasure ; 'tis like as if a combination was got up to make me miserable. But they shall not make me miserable. Listen to me, Malachi Cantillon, you nor they shall not make me miserable.

ELLEN (*running in from doorway*). Here is Tom racing from the police. We have no hand in his coming, Eugene. We can't prevent them coming, Eugene.

EUGENE. Isn't it outrageous ! Well, I'll be bothered from no more of them. I'll go and hide in the room, that's what I'll do. (*TOM passes window.*) Ah, he's in.

[*TOM comes in. He is wild-looking and breathing loudly.*

PETER. Are they after you, my poor fellow ?

TOM. They are after me, and they are before me.

PETER. 'Tis no wonder you'd be the way you are, the terror of the world in your heart after being chased for a week.

TOM. I want a gun—one of Luke's guns. He wouldn't give me the refuse. The river is in flood and the police are on the bridge. There is a boat waiting for me at Glin, but the police are on the bridge. Let me have the gun, Peter Guerin ! I must have the gun !

PETER (*rises and takes guns from behind shutter*). There is two of them and have your choice, and there is a box of fresh caps for you. But, my poor fellow, a rotten kippen would be as powerful in your hands as those old muzzle-loaders before the rifles of the police. 'Tis nearly mad you are, I'm thinking, and that's no wonder too.

TOM. 'Tisn't mad I am, for there is a chance of coming to close quarters with them by creeping along the hedge. And that great fear is gone from me, Peter Guerin. A long time it was in my heart, surely, a long time.

PETER (*in surprise*). And 'tisn't in dread you are at all now, you say ?

TOM. I had a rousing dream. Lying in the heath I was, the warm sun shining down on me. And there appeared to me my Uncle Martin and he standing on the height. Scornful he was, and he pointing down at me. "A man of my breed afraid !" he said, and he laughed. "Look at me that never was afraid," he said. "Look at me that never was afraid." I awoke, and I jumped up with a great feeling rising within me. My heart opened, and I shouted to the skies that I would be afraid no more. Every bone stiffened in me, and I shouted that I would be afraid no more, and that I would repent no more. I had left my crime at the feet of Jesus Christ, and I would repent no more, for what I done I done as a soldier of Ireland. (*Going towards door.*) And if I'll stand in the dock itself 'tisn't a word of repentance will come through my lips, but it's a proud look I'll give them that are condemning me with villainy and impurity ranging through their hearts ; and it's a bitter curse I will give them, a curse that will rise up as a defence for me ringing through the halls of the high heavens, even to the throne of the Almighty God Himself !

[*Goes out.*

PETER. Ah, my fine young man, to be riddled by the police—the black cowards that shot down the men of Ireland when myself and his Uncle Martin stood shoulder to shoulder in the Fenian days ! Sure he was no blackguard, and deceived I was in my pride when I called them blackguards all the fine young men of these latter times. And will I let him—the nephew of my staunchest friend—be riddled by the police ! (*Takes up gun.*) The dirty police ! Ah, the dirty police !

[*Goes out.*

ELLEN. Peter ! Peter ! Peter going to be shot, and all my grand cookeries will be eat over his corpse ! Peter going to

be murdered, Malachi ! Peter that was so good to me ! He was good to me if he was contrary—didn't I always admit it ? Think of the trouble he'd be in if I was hurt the time he'd be insulting the Cantillons in his liquor. " 'Tisn't alluding to you I was at all," he'd say afterwards, he would indeed. He didn't close an eye for three weeks the time I was down with the fayver.

[*Sound of firing outside.*]

MALACHI. They have levelled him, ah, poor Tom ! He is after falling like a sack, his arms going like the wings of a wounded bird. The Fenian is rising in his fury ! Peter is taking aim ! God ! he has wounded the peeler that shot Tom ! Ah, fodha deelin, he is down himself ! Peter Guerin is down !

ELLEN (*in a choked voice*). Peter ! Peter !

MALACHI. Is it out of the earth they have risen the crowds ! They are taking the bodies up. They are bringing them both here, Tom as well as Peter. 'Tis the way they aren't dead entirely yet or they wouldn't be bringing in Tom. Though it would be a fitting thing to wake him here, his sister distracted and his mother near as bad.

ELLEN (*as before*). Peter ! Peter !

EUGENE. Why will you be going on like that, mother ? He rushed to his death in a spurt of folly, and who could stop him ? Why will you be turning away—in God's name, look at me with the soft look of a mother, for I'm in torment too ! (*Pause.*) Be just to me itself. You didn't expect me to do what father done, surely ? The best of his time was spent, but think of what I'd have to lose by facing the police on a forlorn hope, losing all that lay before me—fifty or sixty years maybe of a bounding, vigorous life.

ELLEN. Peter ! Peter !

EUGENE. Don't madden me. Turn to me in your grief. I will be a good head to you ; I will be the best son to you was ever in the world.

MALACHI. When all is over and he is trenched we will be comforting her that way, Eugene. But now it's other words she wants to hear, and she thinking of the great soul that was in Peter Guerin. And, indeed, it's now I know, and maybe I knew it a long time, that all who rose up and fought for Ireland, howsoever they rose up and fought for Ireland, were the great-hearted and the kind. And 'tis like the red sun myself and Peter would be seeing rising above the blue hills and we going to the fairs on the frosty mornings, like the red sun rising up before us to the east chasing away the blue haze of the dawn, so will the fame of Peter rise grandly to the coming time, and it's a long day of glory will be on Peter surely.

[*Voice outside.* Enter several bearing PETER and TOM on stretchers.]

A NEIGHBOUR. They aren't quite dead yet. Wouldn't some one get the book and read the litanies ?

ANOTHER NEIGHBOUR. Give the book to Patcheen Croly, that answers Mass.

FIRST NEIGHBOUR. Be quick, neighbours, for the last throb of life is going. There is only a stir in Tom's little finger, and some movement in Peter's lips and his blood flowing fast. They are unconscious entirely. Read the litanies for these two that fell, Patcheen, the moonlighter and the Fenian man. Soon, neighbours, there will rise for them a litany was never heard in Ireland : from Carrihnavar to Carlevoye the cry will rise before the dawn of day, and from the plains of Lyre to the banks of Faley River.

PATCHEEN (*reads litany for the dying from Catholic prayer-book*).

MALACHI (*feeling the bodies with his hands*). They are cold.

NEIGHBOURS (*dropping quickly on their knees*). Oh, God be merciful to them ! [BREEDA comes in quickly.]

BREEDA (*looking at corpses*). He is gone now, and I'm too late to tell him my heart throbbed only for him, only for him all the time, and I deceiving myself in my folly and my pride. Even in this hour the hardness was in my heart the time he passed me with the gun, and I never knowing the trouble that was on him, or that he was going to his death. And I scorned the one appealing look he gave me. One appealing look he gave me and then walked on so cold and proud. My God ! to let him go to his death with never a word from me to soften for him the bitter pain. Oh, Jesus ! what put the film in my eyes ? Oh, Jesus ! what put the film in my eyes ? Now let not a hair remain in this head ! let prongs of fire come down from the heavens and scorch me to the ground ! (*Puts her hand to her forehead.*) Oh, Jesus !

ELLEN. Peter ! Peter !

BREEDA (*fiercely, suddenly facing EUGENE*). And is it you remained seeing them go to their doom—your father and your friend go to their doom in a golden day ?

EUGENE (*gruffly*). Leave me alone now, Breeda Carmody ! Leave me alone, I'm saying ! New thoughts have come to me, and I am what the Lord God made me. Leave me alone now, and let no one talk to me at all.

ELLEN. Peter ! Peter !

BREEDA (*turning away*). Ah, what signifies it now what any one did or didn't, since he is dead ? But it is for him and the like of him that the flowers smile, and always smiled, in the green soil of Ireland. But he is dead. (*Goes to corpse.*) Tom to be dead ! Oh, Tom ! Oh, love of my heart, is it dead you are ! is it dead ! [*Throws herself on corpse.*

THE PIE-DISH

CHARACTERS

LEUM DONOGHUE.

MARGARET }
JOHANNA } *daughters to LEUM.*

JACK }
EUGENE } *sons to MARGARET.*

FATHER TROY.

THE SCENE IS LAID IN NORTH KERRY.

SCENE.—*Interior of farm-house kitchen. Door at right. To left of door, table. Further to left of this, a settle-bed, window, door leading to bedroom. Fireplace on right side of kitchen, dresser on left.*

At rise of curtain LEUM DONOGHUE is discovered sitting on chair between settle-bed and table, sleeping and snoring. A pie-dish is on the table near him. EUGENE is sitting at fire kneading putty between his hands. JACK comes in slowly.

JACK (*looks at LEUM*). Isn't it easy in himself he is, Eugene, after all the fury that was on him a while ago, all through mother letting that screech to have some one go for the priest for him and he just rising out of that weakness? (*Going towards LEUM.*) 'Tis dozing he is, and if he isn't snoring itself! (*Coming to fireplace.*) Eugene, God forgive me!—but I couldn't help it, it's breaking my heart laughing I was and I stalling in the cows, every minute I'd think of my old durnawny here of eighty years and more, and the turn he got the time she screeched, he pure wild at the notion of leaving this world through means of his not having finished the making of an old pie-dish.

EUGENE (*sourly*). Isn't it great sport that's in it now entirely?

JACK. Ah, people needn't be so bitter in themselves if they have sprained the knee itself; howbe they are a little fine-drawn after being through the sixth book and the

arithmetic, and in course don't be as rough as me or the likes of me, a common, ignorant man. We can't help laughing, Eugene, when a funny thing like this comes across us, and it's a good joke there would be in it if yourself and the grandfather were fifty times the big chums ye are itself.

EUGENE (*sings bitterly*)—

One day as I chanced to go roving—
It being in the sweet month of May,
When Phoebus approaching most blooming
His brilliant and dazzling rays—
I met with a charming young fair one,
Whose aspects did me ensnare,
And she making her way to Dungarvan
It being of a market day.

JACK. Ah, 'tisn't a coolness we'll be having, Eugene, over a thing of nothing. Whisper—what turned me in again was this : the cows were tied up in the stall by me, and it's just on the points I was of making for the priest for the old lad here, when the sound of my name came to me like, and it mother's voice I thought.

EUGENE. Sure 'twas, but she's shy of rising it too high entirely, for fear she'd rouse grandfather. It's around to the hay-haggard she's gone on the search for you, I am thinking. It's a sudden tie she got to slip him in to the settle-bed, and she muttering to herself that you having the great strength you would be the best to rise him and put him into it, and it there longside him, and it's going on and talking to herself she was that 'twouldn't be all the bad if it's in the settle-bed itself she had him before the priest.

JACK. Amirra, what patch would it be on me to hyse him up in the room itself, if it's wishing to her it was, Eugene ?

EUGENE. Ha ! it's in dread of her life she'd be to do that, thinking he'd kick the traces and go wild all out if he woke

up and found himself there. But it's a fancy of hers that that great fury might come on him if he woke in the settle-bed with his pie-dish there on the table before him, and I softening the putty here at the fire for the ornaments that are to be the finishing of it.

JACK. It's nearly fit for the Asylum she is, I am thinking, over this old man ; but sure, isn't the fault her own that didn't keep her gob shut ? Eugene, it's you have great knowledge of what's in the brain of that old man—would the case have been different now if she didn't go making all that tooplaish the time he got the weakness ? Would it strike you at all he'd have let the priest anoint him quietly if his reverence had been slipped here to him unbeknownst ?

EUGENE (*roughly*). How does I know ?

JACK. Oyeh, you don't, maybe ! Wisha, 'tisn't so poisonous you need be, Eugene, the day that's in it, after I bringing you the new trouser from town and all.

EUGENE. 'Tis mother can tell you all of it. It's her hope anyways that the pure shame might put a stop to him from screeching, if he don't wake up till the priest is fornenst him and he in the settle-bed.

JACK. And will it be that way with him, Eugene ?

EUGENE. Yerra, how does I know ?

JACK (*angrily*). What way is that to be going on ? Isn't there that civility in you to answer yes, ay or no, like a man ?

EUGENE. Well, then, listen, Jack, and think of me : it's no content will ever be on him to die at all, and he not having finished the manufacturing of his pie-dish.

JACK (*in a hushed voice*). Eugene, it's an ignorant working-man I am, as you know, but it's a great scholard you are, and if there's brain-work in that pie-dish it isn't dull of it you can be if you were denying your knowledge from this till Mihilmas itself. Mother do be talking it's no cookery will ever be

done in it because of all them putty figarios that's on it, and I heard her say of a day, overright the old man himself, that 'tisn't the geraniums she put in it itself. It's pinching me in to find out what ingenuity is in it, Eugene, and for God's sake give us some hint of what in the wide world it is about at all.

EUGENE. Jack, I don't know no more than the dead, but all the same, as sure as I am telling it to you, it's great wonders are in that pie-dish. I was to know it all in the end when the last ornament was made on it, and he having it planned that I was to take the message to them to come and see it—old Moll of Carraweira, Teigue Rue of Scartaglen, and Jack Bui of Meenscubawn, them three old friends of his that he do be talking often of of late.

JACK (*goes to table and takes up pie-dish*). I never handled it before.

EUGENE. Leave it after you, Jack, or 'tis to let it slip and smash you will, and the big butter fingers that's on you.

JACK. I'll engage it won't fall out of my two hands and the holt I have of it. (*Ironically.*) How precious it is! (*Sways it about.*) Wisha, Eugene, what's in it after all but the pure clay and them putty figarios? what harm if there was shape or form in it like any pie-dish these two eyes ever seen? It's foolery it is. (*Replaces it on corner of table.*) Here, give a hand till I box this old angashore in the settle-bed and let me be going for the priest for him.

[EUGENE limps across floor. They raise LEUM off chair and place him in settle-bed.
MARGARET comes to threshold of entrance-door.

MARGARET. What a foherough was on that loobera, Jack, going for the priest! If it's to hurry I told him itself, couldn't he have known that the old man would have fallen into a

sleep, and what can I do with my whitlow, and Eugene emayshiated from his bad leg? (*Coming in.*) 'Tisn't often there'd be that foherough on our Jack. (*Seeing them.*) Oh, thank God! it's in the bed ye have him already. (*Goes to them.*) It's a great boy entirely you are, Jack, and do be making tracks now for the priest.

EUGENE (*to JACK*). Isn't it great awkwardness that's on you? If I didn't ketch it, it's to let his poor grey head you would fall back again the bolster with a slap.

JACK. It's all right he is now in sure, and let her be tucking the blankets about him. I'll redder the pipe for myself and off with me then for the priest.

[*JACK and EUGENE go to fire. JACK lights pipe; EUGENE takes up putty.*

MARGARET (*arranging bed-clothes*). Be making tracks; be going like the wind! Oh, if it was only the will of God to have Father Troy here now, wouldn't it be a comely thing to have this old man in the bed here before him, over being in that chair or prancing about the floor with the eyes lepping out of his head. (*JACK goes towards door.*) Wouldn't it rise the heart in me if it's the rites he got without letting a screech, and the neighbours never to be a bit the wiser of the way he was making tapes this day!

JACK (*from doorway*). From what Eugene has told me it's in dread I am of it; for let us be roaring at him or coaxing him, let him be in the bed or in the chair, it's all one if we can credit our Eugene, and he a scholard.

MARGARET. Be making lanes—what waiting have you at all?

JACK. But is it full sure you are now, Eugene, that 'twill be the same case with him, eh?

MARGARET. I am telling you be making tracks; be making lanes will you again?

JACK. But, maybe, it might not be the same case with him, Eugene, eh ?

MARGARET. Glory be to God ! Will you be going for the priest ?

JACK (*goes towards fire*). I am asking you, Eugene, maybe it might not be the same case with him now, eh ?

MARGARET (*goes to JACK and presses him towards doorway*). Will you be making lanes, I say ? will you be making tracks ? will you be putting on the scrapers ?

JACK. Isn't it big you are in yourself, Eugene. But it won't be the same case at all, I am thinking, but you and your talk and your knowledge out of the sixth book. Mukeerough !

[*Goes out.* MARGARET *goes and arranges bed-clothes on LEUM.* JOHANNA *comes in.*

JOHANNA. Boloeeriv ! It's hardly I'm able to say it with the weakness that's on me from the flaming sun of noon. What's cooped up in that box by you, Margaret ? (*Clapping her hands.*) In the name of all that's good, 'tisn't our poor father himself that's rolled up in that old settle-bed by you ?

MARGARET. Maybe 'tis well to have him in the settle-bed itself, Joan Bawn.

JOHANNA. 'Tisn't often I darken your doors, black Mage, but it's to your face I say it now, it's a shameful thing for you to be showing the poor old man but that respect overright the people and all.

EUGENE. Old people do often get a tie for them settle-beds, Aunt Joan.

JOHANNA. Don't be giving me talk, you little pleesbeen, and your grandfather in a settle-bed in the kitchen floor ! And 'tis me he left twenty years ago to come to live with you, Margaret, with all his talk of your good-nature, and that if you cut the head of him one minute, 'tis up to your neck in the river you'd go for him the next.

EUGENE (*aside*). It's fit she was to cut the head of him a while ago, sure enough.

JOHANNA (*sitting on chair near fire*). It's again I say it, Margaret, there's great shame on you to be having him there and the people coming in to you. But maybe 'tis the price of him and the great opinion he had out of you. I'll warrant 'tis little thanks I'll get from him to give under tramping it this day all the ways from Glounasroan, through bogs and through briars, through swamps and through rivers ; over dykes, ditches, cleakawns, and inches of felistrums, my legs bending under me, in a manner that I'd never make this cabin this day but for meeting with Marse Quilter of the sheebeen, that forced a bottle of porter on me, and a good warr'nt she always had to give it.

MARGARET. Time indeed it cracked into your skull to come to see him, Joan Bawn, and you hearing he was ailing a Sunday.

JOHANNA. Isn't that queer talk for you, black Mage, and you knowing our sow has bonnives, a big straak of hay down on us, and the servant girl after hoisting her sails ? Is there to be no credit due to me to be endangering my life coming here this roasting day, and he no loss in course, the poor old man, in comparison with me or the likes of me, the mother of a huge family ? (*Rises.*) Now, look here to me, Mage—the world won't clear you in my eyes for flinging our father into a settle-bed.

MARGARET (*comes towards JOHANNA*). If it's there I had him these twenty years itself, 'tisn't you should be reflecting on it, Joan Bawn, and the parish knowing the time he left you was over his being cut short in the butter.

JOHANNA. Oh, 'twas the queer notions made him go talking like that ! It's the same treatment he had from me as my children, and what more does a man want but his three

meals a day? He had his part of a good bed for himself. 'Twas a different story he had of it with his son Flurry, that put him to feed with the servants while Flurry and the wife would be having something tasty above in the room. 'Twas the good head I was to that thankless old man, and 'twasn't into the settle-bed I would fire him in the heel.

MARGARET. Don't be talking of settle-beds; it's to drownd him in the river you would if you had the trouble I had with him over himself and his old pie-dish, and it known to you he's been at manufacturing it ever since the first day he came under the roof to me, twenty years ago.

JOHANNA (*laughing*). 'Tis little excuse you have to be ill-using him over that innocent bit of folly; what harm would there be in it if he gave under making fifty pie-dishes itself?

MARGARET. 'Tis equal to you away out of the world in Glounasroan. 'Tisn't your neighbours do be hinting of the pie-dish to you, and 'tisn't your heart that's broke striving to keep them dull of his capers, capers that won't make the fortunes bigger by my children, and they going matchmaking in the coming time.

JOHANNA. Ug-gay, that little canter of his to injure them! Elaygil! Margaret, when the heart is set on doing a thing 'tisn't far to go to find an excuse for it.

MARGARET (*furiously*). 'Tis you that can be talking with your smooth skin, and a head of meat on you.

JOHANNA. Ug-gay! is it out of your mind you are entirely, and to call me fat? With not a pick on my four bones but that same smooth skin, and what envying have you of it?

MARGARET. There's no trouble on you with your rent paid and your money in the bank. It's lecturing me you'd be for being wild, and a dread in my heart at my family being made a hambug of over that old pie-dish. Look at that old

man to-day after he getting the bad weakness entirely that will sweep him, I am thinking, before the fall of night. It's the first time he was ever put in that settle-bed, I am telling it to you now, and it's there he is with his clothes on itself till the priest will come to anoint him.

JOHANNA. Mage ! yerra, 'tisn't telling me you are the coat, trouser, and waistcoat are on him ?

MARGARET. Amosta, I am then, and his two shoes itself if you said it. It's the tops of his nail-boots you can see there rising over the heel-boards. And it's a good job it is to have him in that settle-bed, for 'twasn't wanting to be anointed he was at all, nor 'twasn't a word about death he wanted to hear at all, because, if you please, there's a couple of ornaments wanting to his blessed old pie-dish !

JOHANNA (*throws up her hands*). Why were you keeping this from me, and I talking and wronging you ? He not in his clean linen before the priest ! He not willing to be anointed through means of an old pie-dish ! Isn't it cool you are, Margaret ? Isn't that the almightyest scandal that could overtake the good name of any farmer's family in the wide world ? While you'd be clapping your two hands together, the like of that would flash through the known world, and there isn't a child belonging to either of us but would be cut short in the fortune through means of it ! Is that the pie-dish I see in the table fornenst me ? Here, let me ketch a holt of it till I take it outside and smash it up again the wall.

[*Goes towards table ; EUGENE limps between her and pie-dish.*

EUGENE. Upon my own soul, Joan Bawn, if it's to clap a hand on it you will, I'll stick !

JOHANNA. Is it to think of stopping me you would, my old bocal of a fairy ? Come out of that, till I ketch it and smash it into smithereens !

MARGARET (*catches her*). Don't be making the case fifty times worse than it is itself. If he woke and found his pie-dish gone, it's his heart's blood he'd give with the dint of screeching.

JOHANNA. It's in dread of him you are, Mage, and maybe 'tis your own son that's pampering him and petting him and backing him up again you. I'll engage if that old man was with me I'd be having no hillibilloo, but it's a proper way I'd have him conduct himself in accordance with his years. Let us take him up in the room, undress him, and put him into his bed in his clean linen in a manner that we'll have him in the shape of a Christian before the priest in spite of himself and his old pagan pie-dish.

MARGARET. I wished we could, but there's no power. Oh, Peter, it's moving he is, it's waking up he is, glory be to God !

[LEUM *half-rises in settle-bed* ; JOHANNA and MARGARET *fall back a step* ; EUGENE *goes to fire*.]

LEUM. In the name of all that's good, where is it I am ? Ah, there's my pie-dish. I declare to my God, it's in the settle-bed I am ! (*Looks at MARGARET and JOHANNA*.) Ha ! I see ye, the pair of ye, and what coadjutering have ye now ? Is it you put me here, Margaret ? No, it's her pinched you to do it, seldom with her, the strap ! to be thinking of us or troubling us with her company.

MARGARET. I'll warrant 'tis no hand she had in it, then, and if she had itself what blame would you be having on her and the way you are ? It's no time for you to be making tapes, old man, and the right thing done by you. Lie back on your bolster ; it's I myself landed you in that settle-bed, leastways 'twas I got Jack and Eugene to do it, and there's great shame on you if it's going on and raging you'll be again.

LEUM. Eugene ! It's you, Eugene, she is after saying !

EUGENE. Sure, how could I help it and the way the case is with herself ? It's galled I am to have a hand in it, I promise you, but it's off my stems I'll go entirely if it's turning again me you'll be over it, and we ever and always the biggest of chums, grandfather Leum.

LEUM. It's as limber as ever I feel in myself, and it's tasby itself that's in me, Eugene. (*Throws off blankets.*) I'll warrant it's disappointed you'll be, big as the hurry you're in with me out of the world, begrudging me, maybe, the bit I eat.

MARGARET. It's a bad right for you to be saying that to me in the heel.

LEUM (*excitedly*). Maybe, but wherefore was it you coogled me into this settle-bed in the middle of the broad noonday ?

[*He scrambles out of the bed, shaking and panting.*

MARGARET. You grey and hoary old man, go back to your bed for yourself, go back to your bed at once, will you ?

[*Rushes at LEUM ; EUGENE catches her.*

EUGENE. In the name of the Lord, be easy with him, mother, or it's red sorrow will be on you in the day to come.

JOHANNA (*advancing to LEUM*). It's well I know, my poor old man, it's no mass you have on me at all, but if all the blowing you do be having out of Margaret isn't a pure hambug, it's said by her you should be now whatever, the day that's in it.

LEUM. Will you houl', you thing ! (*She catches him by arm ; he struggles.*) Let me go—go from me—or it's to scrope those two smooth cheeks I will with these nails and claw the two eyes out of your yellow head !

JOHANNA (*holding him by arm*). Now, father, aweinach, come up in the room and go in to your bed for yourself like

a Christian. Come, Margaret ! Come, Eugene ! and let ye be helping me with this poor man. Isn't it for his own sake I am, aroo ? [Presses him slowly towards bedroom door.

LEUM. Eugene ! Eugene !

EUGENE (*limping after JOHANNA*). Leave go of him, Joan Bawn, or it's to ram the tongs I will down your mortal throat.

[Drags JOHANNA off LEUM.

LEUM. Good man, Eugene ! Beat her, slash her, and stamp on her carcass ! (*Goes to corner of table near pie-dish.*) Is the putty soft by you yet, Eugene ?

EUGENE (*taking up putty and rubbing it*). 'Tisn't that melted yet the way you want it, but it's on the points.

LEUM (*sits down at table and places his hands on pie-dish*). My wonderful pie-dish ! It's my heart's blood is in you, my pie-dish ! 'Tis little more will crown it, Eugene, and then it's for old Moll of Carraweira you will go, and Black Jack of Scartaglen, and old Teigue of Glounaneinta—to come and see it in all its glory. Them is all that's left of the friends of my youth ; and 'tis a lot are gone and cold surely, since I first gave under making my pie-dish twenty years ago.

[*His head falls slightly.*

MARGARET. There's noise outside, and there's two talking coming up the bawn. (*She runs to window ; JOHANNA runs to entrance-door.*) God above ! it's Jack and the priest.

[*Weeps.*

LEUM (*raising his head and screaming*). The priest ! The priest !

MARGARET (*wringing her hands*). Oh, wirra deelin ! what will I do ? what will I do ? (*Coming opposite LEUM.*) Old man, for the last time I beg it of you, will you lie back in your bed ? Will you do it for charity sake to please me itself ? (*Short pause.*) God forgive me now, then, but hear it from me in the heel, if it isn't wishing to me that it wasn't a cold

corpse you fell the time you got the weakness ; ah, wasn't it the biggest scruple that the death didn't sweep you in that slap and save me from this great disgrace !

JOHANNA. It's in on us they are, Margaret. (*Running to middle of floor.*) What devil tempted me—what foolery was on me to leave my good home in Glounasroan to meet this shame—the melt broke in me from the boiling sun of June, my legs all scrope from scorts of briars ? What lunacy was on me ? Let me hide in the room.

[JACK and FATHER TROY appear on threshold.

EUGENE takes off his hat. MARGARET and JOHANNA bend knees. JOHANNA then goes on her knees at fireplace.

FATHER TROY. Salvation to you all ! (*Seeing LEUM.*) What ! it isn't the sick man, Leum Donoghue, I find sitting up in his chair ? And it's for this man I was dragged off my gig and I having urgent business in the town of Lyre ! Will you good people never have any consideration for your priest, hurrying me where there's no urgency, and other times leaving your sick go to the points of drawing the breath and then hauling me out of my bed in the dead hour of the night ?

[JACK goes near JOHANNA.

LEUM. Ptse ! it's a deal of pains it makes for them what inconvenience they put on your reverence. Amostha, the devil a whack wrong with me, but they griping to have me in my grave, and hysing your reverence here thinking you'd hurry and frighten me into it !

FATHER TROY. I wished indeed, Leum Donoghue, it's your good colour I had on my face.

MARGARET. Don't be put astray by that old angashore, Father Troy, howbe the two cheeks are rosy now by him itself, for I am telling it to you it's the false flush entirely that's come on them two cheeks and the hour that is in it.

{ JOHANNA. Wisha, your reverence, father dear, 'tisn't put out you'd be by an old ancient man and he flushed, and 'tisn't taking notice of him you would and he ravelling in his talk as the like of him do, ever and always. But sure if he was young itself, says you, don't there be diseases going that makes the people look all the better and talk all the funnier the bigger they get stuck in them ; and, God help us ! more queer diseases hanging over the Christian than the blades of grass are numerous growing in the field. But what am I saying ? isn't it your reverence knows best of all that let what disease overtake a man—let him be young or let him be old—'tis a change for the better like would often come over him before the death swep him entirely.

FATHER TROY. That's true, my good woman, surely ; for it's great and wonderful changes I have seen before the awful moment when the poor soul escapes from its prison of mortal clay. Still, it's a queer way for this old man to be talking, if it's near his end he is, with that firm ring in his voice and all.

LEUM. Yerra, why shouldn't it be firm, your reverence, and I as lively as a bee in myself ? (*Laughs.*) 'Tis little respect the pair of them have for your cloth and the way they are splitting big lies fornenst your face. It's as healthy as a crow I am, in sure, and as sound as bell-metal itself, thank God ! and don't be spending any more of your time in this cabin, Father Troy.

JACK (*to JOHANNA*). Glory be to Peter ! Aunt Joan, isn't it a great shame ? It's roused entirely the old grey shandanagh is in himself, and it's dolled entirely I am on account of him, made a big liar of overright the priest itself. Wouldn't we let his reverence know of that pie-dish ?

JOHANNA. Hold your tongue, you fooleen, till I think of a good lie to whisper to the priest that'll make spir-spar of all the old man's raging. 'Tisn't roused he is at all, I am telling

you, but a little flutter that's on him. Ha ! what's on him now ? His head is falling ; it's quavering he is . . .

MARGARET (*running to table*). Father Troy, will you look at him now, and the change that's come over him ?

FATHER TROY (*moving towards LEUM*). My God ! it's grey he has turned in the features—quite grey.

LEUM (*half-raising his head*). Eugene, the putty, the putty !

EUGENE (*half-rising*). It's coming I am with it.

LEUM. The putty for my lovely pie-dish.

[*His head falls ; he snores.*

FATHER TROY (*turning round*). A pie-dish ! What mysteries are here ?

JACK. It's no more secrecy is in it now whatever, Aunt Joan, and let me tell him the whole story and put the character of being a brazen liar off of me entirely. (*Moving towards priest.*) It's no liar I was, your reverence, and I hurrying you here, but it's in dread I was somehow to tell you the whole of his complaint. It's that pie-dish, it's through means of that pie-dish, he—but (*to MARGARET*) maybe you'd be wild. Maybe 'tis wild she'd be if I told your reverence and the way she is—maybe 'tis wild she'd be.

MARGARET. Go on, you loobera, and tell it whole-ways now as you began it, and don't be telling it half-ways, making the case fifty times worse with us before the priest, as if 'tisn't misfortune enough that's on us this woful day.

JACK. Well then, your reverence, it's sour he is to be leaving this world because he hasn't a certain pie-dish fully made to his fancy, so that old Moll of Carraweira and few more might have a peep at it.

FATHER TROY. It isn't right the old man is, for wasn't there a strain of lunacy in the Pringles of Lisroe ?

MARGARET (*hotly*). Indeed there was not, but they being a little airy in themselves the same as the Carmodys of

Moinveerna, and 'tisn't far out the Carmodys were from your mother's people, the Shanahans, begging your reverence's pardon.

FATHER TROY. It's wicked he is, then !

MARGARET. It's devilment must be in that pie-dish, Father Troy.

FATHER TROY. What devilment are you talking of, woman ? It's the devil himself has Leum Donoghue body and soul, if through means of this pie-dish he is preventing him from thinking of his God.

JOHANNA. Wisha, father, we'll be keeping nothing back from you now, and let us tell you how it all came to be. 'Twas in the fort the thought of it must come to him, the big fort below our house in Glounasroan, where Mage Quirke slept of a day, and for six years after she couldn't put a leg under her till in the heel the half of a chaney mug came out of her instep that the good people flung at her, in course, the time she fell asleep. That old man slept in the same fort a week after what happened to Mage.

FATHER TROY. What superstitious foolery do I hear from you, woman ?

JOHANNA. It's only giving you the history of that pie-dish I am, your reverence, let the power of them that do be in the forts be little or much. 'Tis never before we heard talks of a pie-dish come from him, and I'll engage 'tisn't the likes of that was making pains for him ever till that day, and he always an industrious man about the fields.

FATHER TROY. Don't be talking, woman, don't be talking ; it's the devil has him !

JOHANNA. He slept in the fort the day he left me at Glounasroan, and Margaret can tell your reverence he started the pie-dish the morning after, and that's twenty years ago to-day.

LEUM (*raising his head suddenly*). Twenty years at my pie-dish, twenty years ! and thirty years before that thinking of it, but I neglecting to give under making it all that time with diversions coming between me and it. But it's fifty years the pie-dish is in my brain, and isn't it great work if I don't get time to finish it in the heel ? isn't it great work if I don't get time to finish it in the heel ?

FATHER TROY. Leum Donoghue, think of your poor soul, for it's plain to me now that your time is dwindling fast.

LEUM. It's lies you are telling me ; it isn't to die I can now. Eugene, the putty !

MARGARET (*crosses to LEUM*). Old man, will you have shame and listen to the Lord's anointed ?

LEUM. Go from me, woman, or it's a bitter curse you will get from my heart that will wither you and yours from the face of the world.

JOHANNA (*clasping her hands and looking sideways towards FATHER TROY*). St. Joseph intercede for my poor father !

[JACK returns to fireplace.]

MARGARET. The film is coming in your eye, old man, and will you give heed in time to the anointed of the Lord ?

JOHANNA. St. Joseph intercede for him ! (LEUM *shakes ; priest catches him by arm.*) Is it the rattle in his throat you heard, Jack ?

JACK. 'Twas some soart of thing in the shape of a click, you'd think.

JOHANNA. Oh, Father Troy, do something for him, and you having the power. St. Joseph and all the saints in heaven, pray for him !

FATHER TROY. My poor man, give yourself up now to the good God and to His Holy Mother, and put all thoughts of this sinful world away from your heart entirely.

LEUM. It's my pie-dish I am thinking of, I am telling you.

FATHER TROY (*soothingly*). My poor old man, what concern is it to you now, a miserable pie-dish? Leum Donoghue, let me administer to you the last rites of our Holy Mother, the Church.

LEUM (*screams and throws off priest*). 'Tisn't to be anointed I will. Go from me. (*Bends towards pie-dish and catches it.*) My pie-dish! my pie-dish!

FATHER TROY (*sternly and loudly*). Leum Donoghue, your hour has come!

MARGARET. Your hour has come, old man!

JOHANNA. His hour has come! Saints in heaven, pray for him before it is too late entirely!

LEUM (*giving a dazed look around him*). Was it the priest said my hour has come? (*Straightens himself up suddenly, holding pie-dish between his hands. He goes a step towards corner of table.*) It's black lies he is telling me. 'Tisn't my hour that has come to me. Good God above in heaven, 'tisn't without mercy you would be and to take me out of the world like this! Oh, the pain that's through me! Good God, give me time—it's surely you'll give me time—I pray for time to finish my pie-dish! Isn't this a terrible pain entirely? (*Shakes.*) God above, isn't it time I will get after all? Ah, 'tis killing me that pain is. Good God in heaven, it's time I must get—if it isn't time from God I'll get, maybe the devil will give me time! Let the devil himself give me time, then, let him give me time to finish my pie-dish, and it's his I'll be for ever more, body and soul!

[*He shakes. The pie-dish falls and breaks. He screams and falls back on chair.*

EUGENE. There, it's in bits now, and what it was or what it wasn't no one in the wide world will be a pin's point the wiser for ever more.

[*Priest goes and places his hand on LEUM's heart.*

JACK. It's a scruple, Aunt Joan, if it's gone entirely without the rites he is and the priest up to his hip itself.

FATHER TROY (*turning round*). He is dead, and 'tis likely he is damned !

MARGARET (*clapping her hands*). Oh, not damned !

JOHANNA (*catching JACK by arm*). Dead and damned, Jack, and it's disgraced we'll be over him during the duration of time through the length and breadth of Europe.

FATHER TROY. What folly and vanity there do be in this short world ! But what was in this at all ? (*Takes up piece of pie-dish.*) What was in this at all ?

MARGARET (*taking priest by sleeve*). But it isn't certain entirely that it is damned he is, Father Troy ? (*Pause. She lets go priest's arm and goes towards corpse.*) 'Tisn't damned he is, and no sin on him but what he did in the heel. But it's dead he is, and where was the good in my being too hard and bitter with him in his latter end ! (*Throwing herself on her knees.*) May the Lord have mercy on his soul !

CURTAIN.



THE MAGIC GLASSES

CHARACTERS

JAYMONY SHANAHAN.

PADDEN, *his father.*

MAINEEN, *his mother.*

MR. QUILLE.

AUNT JUG.

AUNT MARY.

SCENE. — PADDEN SHANAHAN'S *kitchen*. MAINEEN *comes down from room*. PADDEN *comes in*. MAINEEN *places glasses and a bottle on table*.

MAINEEN. See now, Padden, all is in readiness for Mr. Quille, let him come what hour 'twill match him. And, oh hierna ! the heart is rising in me at the thought of his putting Jaymony off that habit of his of going up in the top loft, our fine sons, Roger and Frynk, lighting with shame on account of it, and saying they'll come home to us no more on their holydays if their brother don't get shut of his canter.

PADDEN. Still, 'tis meself is thinking 'tis a reckless thing to be hysing this Mr. Quille here on a false pretence that Jaymony has his breast bone down. 'Tis unknown what the stranger will do when he'll know the truth, he an almighty passionate man, they do be saying, that don't like to be deceived.

MAINEEN. What croaking have you now, and as rejoiced as you were to coax the great man here ? 'Tisn't a face we'd have surely to send for a stranger twenty miles away with a high-diddle story of a lad going up in a top loft—'twould take pains to make Mr. Quille believe the like of that.

PADDEN. Faith, from what I'm after hearing 'twill take pains to please him, whatever way you take him. And 'tisn't alone having the punch steaming on the table to him almost he's over the threshold will do ; for Mary Sofine says the half-sovereign must be slipped to him half unbeknownst,

160 The Magic Glasses

the pride is that big in him. To put all words into one, Maineen, the notions and capers of the devil is in this Mr. Quille.

MAINEEN. 'Tis the same with all them geniuses, Padden, every mother's son of them nothing but notions and capers since the world began itself.

PADDEN. But, maybe, he isn't the big genius we thought him after all. Sure, some say 'twas the great fame he got the first day from curing the breast bone down made people go running to him with this and that in the line of diseases, and, the pride and gumption rising in him, he couldn't renayge himself attempting all before him—things he was as dull of as the biggest fool walking the road.

MAINEEN. Glory ! Listen to that, and yourself his biggest praiser—drawing down but a few nights ago itself how he cured Mary Canty of the dropsies and the swellings with his dilution of the white heather that does be growing in the bogs ; likewise how he set a charm for Looney Carroll put him from going around every tree he'd meet, the fool thinking there was money under it ; and making tapes you were itself of the marvel he did entirely with a blue lozenge that made Josie Patt keep his big tongue back in his mouth, and it ever and always going out that length in spite of him with every third syllable he'd speak.

PADDEN. Maybe I got another account puts a different colour on some of his miracles. Morisheen Quirke wouldn't give in that dilution would cure a boil, and, he told me in private, 'twas no dropsies or swellings Mary Canty had at all, but a bully ball of wind in her stomach, that came up in a hurry, believe you me, at the fright Mr. Quille gave her, he to coagle her into a corner, gave her a thump in the middle, and stuck out his tongue at her in the dark.

MAINEEN. Morisheen is a prime boy.

PADDEN. If he is itself, 'tisn't Morisheen but another man was eye-witness to the way he managed Looney Carroll, chasing him through a wood in the dead hour of the night till the fool ran up again a tree unbeknownst, was flung back on his back, the blood of a pig spouting out of his nostrils, and, signs by, the fool won't go around a tree since, and it stuck in him that every tree has got a devil. A queerer thing itself he did on Josie Patt. Hit him on the head with a mallet, I hear, when the big tongue was out and the teeth coming together —the Lord save us, half the big tongue fell down on the ground !

MAINEEN. A likely story ! And Josie's people blowing about Mr. Quille all over the world, nothing in their mouths but that blue lozenge, talking of it from dusk till dawn at every hour of the day.

PADDEN. Because they believed Mr. Quille, and Josie can't tell whether or which, and nothing but gibberish coming from him since. Sure, they went to Mr. Quille about the way he was pronouncing, and what did my boy say but that it was French he was talking—that they all speak French for a while after being cured—and he'd come into the English again in the course of forty weeks. And, when this Mr. Quille comes along, I'm thinking it's wise people we'd be if we put the bed and dresser to the door and keep the devil out.

MAINEEN. Indeed, Padden, we'll do no such thing, and I'm thinking it's something must be rising in your brain to believe the fables going lately about Mr. Quille. Isn't it myself heard fables and didn't give ear to them, and isn't it yourself heard fables and didn't give ear to them, and what's come over you all in a hop ?

PADDEN. He's a rogue, Maineen, and a devil of a variegated rogue itself ! And with respect to his great speciality entirely of curing the breast bone down—God help you !—

162 The Magic Glasses

a man from his own quarter told me, " You have a better hand at it," said he, " up to your own door—a man there's no talk of at all, Michaeleen James O'Toole."

MAINEEN. Oh, my shame, Padden, to dare compare Mr. Quille with Michaeleen James. Padden, you'll make me say it, but it's a bad sign on you entirely to be losing your respect for the great. 'Twould be better you'd lose the brain itself than lose your respect. But it's shivering you are, shaky and shivery all over you are, Padden Shanahan.

PADDEN. Why wouldn't I be shivering, the ground a cake of frost, and the bitter breeze blowing from the North would perish the Danes or skin a flea itself.

MAINEEN. Shivering and shaking, and there's a skyon in your eye, Padden Shanahan, glory be to God ! 'Tisn't anything, anything airy or fearsome you seen and you are at the fort ?

PADDEN (*hesitatingly*). I seen a man, then, a strange man, and he rising like a cloud over the gap in Peg Caxty's bounds ditch.

MAINEEN. Sure, maybe 'tis Mr. Quille himself you seen ?

PADDEN. Well, there's no good in denying it, 'twas the very customer. I couldn't mistake him by the descriptions I got of him—a long black coat on him, and a hat like a parson. Believe you me, 'tisn't long I was putting the legs under me and skelping home by the hedges, for it's a huge man he is, glory be to God ! Taking up a big streak of the land itself he was, and he coming and walking through Aeneas Canty's square field. Holy Father, Maineen, he's the biggest and the blackest man I ever seen !

MAINEEN (*soothingly*). What harm, Padden. Like a good man, now, don't let his size be frightening you. Sure, for all we know, though being big he might be as soft in himself as a

fool. And, Padden, think of our gintlemen. Be brave in yourself for the sake of having Jaymony cured before our fine respectable sons. Be thinking of Robin, the acting-sergeant, and 'twill put great heart in you to face Mr. Quille.

PADDEN. I'll be thinking of Robin, then, the rosy shine on his face, the clean shoe to his foot, and he sitting down to his bread, butter, tea, and two eggs. A great man for law and order is Robin. Let me be thinking of Robin, Maineen.

MAINEEN. And Frynk in the London peelers, a bigger man still. Be thinking of Frynk and the night at Mrs. Quinlan's wake, and the way he made an ape of Poet O'Rourke in the argument about Dublin and London.

PADDEN. I will, and how the poet turned as black as the hob, and hadn't a word out of him for the rest of the night when Frynk turned on him in the heel and said, " You ain't got no 'Yde Park ; you ain't got no Rotten Row."

MAINEEN. And the chicken, Padden. You mind he didn't know what to make of the chicken and she walking across the floor ?

PADDEN. Frynk lying back in his chair, and he breaking his heart laughing, " There she goes agin," said Frynk, said he ; " there she goes agin."

MAINEEN. 'Tisn't " agin," Padden, but " agyne." " There she goes agyne," said Frynk, and the lovely way he has of talking.

PADDEN (*rising, pointing out door*). Oh, Maineen, look at Mr. Quille, look at him now, and he marching down our triangle. Holy Father, you'd think the wide world wasn't in it but himself, he brooding and his head under him !

MAINEEN. 'Tis the proper way for him to come marching, Padden, and all he ever seen retained in his great brain. 'Tis no faith I'd have in him at all if he was going in a little boat peeping about him like a codger. Oh, glory ! It must be a

wonderful great man he is, surely, and almighty marvels running in his mind.

PADDEN (*handing her money*). Here ! Shove the half-sovereign to him yourself whatever, as you can do it nicely, having the slippery fingers of a female. I'll go up in the room for a while, as 'tis an awkward man I am, and shy in myself before strangers. You to be introducing yourself to him, Maineen, and I'll come down after a bit.

MAINEEN (*running after him and catching him*). For the love of God, Padden, stay and welcome Mr. Quille ! The fine respectable man, what would he think of the boss of the house chambering on a fine day ? Sit down in the chair now, for yourself ; rise up in your dignity when he comes in, and bow your respects to him with a fine smile on your face.

PADDEN (*looking out window*). He has lepped off the stile. He is coming up the bawn. A swarthy devil ! Holy Father, the cut of him and he blowing out of his two yellow cheeks ! Let me go, will you !

[*They struggle.*

MAINEEN. Padden !

PADDEN. Maineen !

[*QUILLE comes in ; he stands with his back to dresser facing PADDEN and MAINEEN. He utters a long loud sound through his nose.*

QUILLE (*in a deep mournful voice*). Twenty miles of a tramp to cure a boy with the breast bone down ! Twenty miles, and starting with the streak of dawn ! (*Harshly.*) Yet there's devils would say the fame of Morgan Quille would never pass the bounds of Beenahorna—doctors, priests, and jealous devils would say Morgan Quille was a quack—a quack, Padden Shanahan, if it's to you I'm speaking !

PADDEN. It is, sir ; welcome here, sir. (*Aside.*) Speak, Maineen !

QUILLE. But look at me flourishing like a heap of dock

leaves you'd vainly strive to smother by covering up with stones, for no man can wither the root or blast the fame of Morgan Quille of Beenahorna.

[Blows nose.]

PADDEN (*aside*). Maineen, the punch !

QUILLE. Twenty miles to cure a boy with the breast bone down ! I would, then, and a hundred miles itself flaking over a side of a country to come at the stiffest case of that disease ! Where's the patient ?

PADDEN. The thing is up in the top loft, sir. Speak, Maineen ! In the name of God explain to his honour about the top loft !

QUILLE. Is it giggling and sniggering ye are ? Giggling and sniggering at Morgan Quille ?

PADDEN. Oh, God forbid, sir ! Maineen !—alluding to the top loft, sir . . .

QUILLE (*taking a step forward*). To the devil with yourself and your top loft ! Ha ! Maybe it's a doubt ye have on the powers of Morgan Quille ? Some one has belied me about the case of Michaeleen O'Rourke.

PADDEN. That I may be dead and damned if I ever heard a syllable !

QUILLE. You lie, you sheefra ! But did Michaeleen obey my instruction and come to me the nine mornings fasting to be cupped ? Didn't the villain do for a twopenny loaf on the ninth morning unbeknownst, that made the breast bone fail to rise and I having the tumbler full of the flesh of his bosom, you brat ? The blackguards and liars didn't tell you that maybe, the blackguards and liars that Christ Almighty will wither off the face of the earth as Christ Almighty has withered more than slandered my name !

[Faces PADDEN, who hides behind MAINEEN.]

MAINEEN. Mr. Quille—God forgive me !—'tis no breast bone down that's wrong with Jaymony ; but 'tis well known

to us there is no complaint you can't cure through means of that inspiration you get when you let yourself into the falling sickness. (*Gives him punch.*) We know 'tis only for special people you does it. (*Giving him money.*) But having the big heart, you might have mercy on us and the way we are, Mr. Quille.

QUILLE. Your faith opens my heart, and what can be done will be done, Mrs. Shanahan.

PADDEN (*coming forward confidentially*). And maybe 'tis more merciful you'd be to us still when we tell you it's as humble in ourselves we are now in our riches and four cows as when we hadn't a cow or a calf ; and we does good turns for neighbours without looking to be paid back—'tisn't like the born farmers that would have to get a return if it went to the fourth generation itself.

QUILLE (*sharply*). What are you saying ? Isn't all the world born farmers in the way you allude, and, God help you, if you haven't a few tricks of your own !

PADDEN (*meaning to please*). 'Tis you must have some fine tricks surely, Mr. Quille.

QUILLE. You snake ! (*Catching him and flinging him across floor.*) Is it me have tricks ? Is it me ? Me to stoop to the dirty ways of the things that do be daubing each other in the puddles and the gutters and the sewers of the world ! Me that can sweep them clean in the battlefield of the intellect, making them run like rats fleaping into their dirty holes, or cockroaches racing for their dirty lives before the glint of dawn ! (*Music in top loft ; he starts.*) Heavenly Father ! What queer music is that upstairs ?

MAINEEN. It's Jaymony, Mr. Quille ; and that's what we want him cured of, and his fancy for going up in that top loft and making that noise in it.

QUILLE (*taken aback*). Why, that's a fancy complaint

entirely. (*Going and sitting at fire.*) Hum ! But we'll see. (*Speaking in a professional way.*) Come here now, and give me the exact rudiments of his case. How long has he recourse to that top loft ?

MAINEEN. God knows, sir, our little boy is going up in that top loft most every day since he was in the fifth book.

PADDEN. He kept out of it for a while, Maineen, the time he was in his bloom.

MAINEEN. What signify was that ? God knows, sir, counting every absence, he didn't keep clear of it for a twelvemonth.

QUILLE. His age ?

MAINEEN. What age is on the boy, Padden ? He was born whatever the year the bog ran at Cloranmadkeen ; the same year that Rourke's son of Meenscubawn knocked the eye out of Timothy Mascal at the election between Hassett and Dayse in the town of Listowel.

PADDEN. The year the tinkers had the battle with the Moynsha people on the bridge of Lyre.

QUILLE (*pondering and counting on his fingers.*). That makes him thirty-eight—a long and a chronic case, faith. Well, what does he be playing in that top loft ?

MAINEEN. I'm dull of it, Mr. Quille, for I'm too wide in the girth to get into it, and Padden is too shy in himself to seek out the hidden mystery.

QUILLE (*meaningly*). Maybe 'tis shy for him, Mrs. Shanahan. For it's the strange music that is entirely like what they do be playing in Teernanogue, or what they hear them that do be drowning to their death. [Rises.]

PADDEN. Holy Father ! Maineen, is it a fairy, then, that's in the top loft and our Jaymony swept away ?

QUILLE (*walking up and down floor with hands behind his back.*). We must make out if it is a Christian he is or if it isn't

168 The Magic Glasses

a Christian he is. (*Looking up at top loft.*) Is there ere a chance of getting a peep at him now?

MAINEEN. The dickens a chance, but it's up to the tips for his tea, and, believe you me, he won't forget that whatever else will escape him. There's some stir out of him as it is and you'd hear the boards creaking.

QUILLE (*walking up and down as before*). I'm saying we must first make out if it is a Christian he is or if it isn't a Christian he is. Let me think now—I have it. Put the tongs in the fire and redder it.

PADDEN (*as MAINEEN puts tongs in fire*). Holy Father, Maineen!

QUILLE. Put the tongs in the fire and redder it.

JAYMONY (*loudly in top loft*). Is the tea drawn yet?

MAINEEN (*putting tea in teapot*). 'Tis drawn and shallow drawn.

JAYMONY. 'Tis not drawn, and 'tisn't wet itself, for it's after washing up the chaney you are with the boiling water, and putting cold water in the kettle. Don't be trying to blink me, for I heard the cover rattling, and 'tis the same with you every day, using the water and leaving me waiting for my tea. The selfishness of this world is a terror, but I'm warning you if the tea isn't drawn the minute I hop down out of this, there isn't a mug in the dresser I won't smash, and I'll break the window, and so every devil around the house will make it the sorry day to you you got into the habit of renayging me in the tea.

MAINEEN (*to QUILLE*). As peevish as a cat always when coming out of that top loft. (*Loudly.*) Here now, you vagabone. (*Going to table with teapot.*) Isn't it on the table it is itself, and listen to me putting the sugar into it and stirring the sugar in the cup.

JAYMONY (*coming down*). And the white bread and the jam?

MAINEEN. And the white bread and the jam. (*He comes down.*) There now, isn't it quick enough for you, my walking gentleman upstairs?

JAYMONY. 'Twill do, and 'tis to be hoped you'll be as regular for the future. 'Twould be a great boon to me. (*Takes off cap and eats and drinks rapidly, QUILLE from corner watching him intently. When done he blesses himself and puts on cap. Meditatively.*) That jam was damn nice, mother dear.

[*Lights pipe; rises; walks towards dresser. Sees QUILLE. Takes pipe out of mouth and turns his face away from QUILLE as if ashamed. QUILLE goes stealthily towards JAYMONY. Puts hand behind back motioning with finger. PADDEN hands him tongs.*

QUILLE. Down on your knees now, you haunted thing. (*JAYMONY drops on his knees.*) Keep looking at me or I'll send this red-hot tongs fizzling down into your baistly guts. Sacramento, Dominus vobiscum, mea culpa, mea maxime culpa, kyrie eleison, excelsior! I abjure thee by these words, tell me what you are and what you aren't. Are you Catholic?

JAYMONY (*meekly*). I am, sir.

QUILLE (*softly*). Are you, faith? Very good. And now, my bucko, if you are, maybe you'll say what I say after me: In the name of the Father.

JAYMONY. In the name of the Father.

QUILLE. In the name of the Son.

JAYMONY. In the name of the Son.

QUILLE. In the name of the Holy Ghost. (*Short pause.*) Ha!

JAYMONY. In the name of the Holy Ghost.

QUILLE (*pulling JAYMONY towards hearth*). Come along here, you're some sort of a Christian. Here, take this medicine and talk to me.

170 The Magic Glasses

JAYMONY (*drinking*). 'Tis you I'd like to be talking to, then, and you a knowledgeable man.

PADDEN. Holy Father, Maineen ! 'Tis working him—the medicine.

QUILLE. Hush ! hush ! (*To JAYMONY.*) Come, tell me, what's your meaning in going up in that top loft ?

JAYMONY (*shrugging his shoulders*). Wisha, 'tis better than being in the slush—same old thing every day—this an ugly spot, and the people ignorant, grumpy, and savage.

QUILLE. By the way, they aren't double as bad above in Beenahorna ; and I'm telling you it's a happy man you'd be out in the green fields for yourself with the sunny sky over you, if you knew the inside of Tralee Jail where I was landed for six months—(*rising in great anger and excitement*)—on a false charge brought against me by devils during the time of the Agitation. By devils, I'm saying, by devils !

[*Subsides.*

JAYMONY (*sadly*). Times I know it's a fool I am, surely, but the fancy's got stuck in me for them Magic Glasses, and the sport I had with them up in that top loft.

QUILLE. From whence, may I inquire, did you procure them Magic Glasses ?

JAYMONY. From a brown woman, sir.

QUILLE (*meaningly*). From a brown woman, ha !

JAYMONY. 'Twas on a summer's day and we going to the pattern of Lyre—myself and them two brothers of mine that are now ignorant peelers.

MAINEEN. Oh hierna ! Is it reflecting you are on my two fine gentlemen of sons ? What learning had you beyond them yourself and you barely out of the sixth book ?

PADDEN. Too much learning he has, Maineen. Too much for sense, sir, and too little for common sense.

QUILLE (*waving his hand*). Be easy now, my good

people, and let me examine the patient. (*To JAYMONY.*) Proceed !

JAYMONY. It's through a wood the brown woman came to me, and it wasn't a crackle or a noise at all she made and she walking on the grass so green. She stood for a while where the bluebells grow.

QUILLE. Hum ! She stood for a while.

JAYMONY. Going she was and selling her wares at the pattern of Lyre. And didn't I give her all I had for a set of the Magic Glasses ! It put her in great blood, and, said she, “ ‘Tis the like of you I always want to meet that has the spunk in you, and I’m thinking you won’t get tired of your purchase and fling it away from you in a week like many that haggles over the price of a glass or two, for ‘tisn’t one in a thousand buys of me the whole set.”

QUILLE (*wisely*). I see !

JAYMONY. “ For it’s the pleasure and diversion of the world,” said she, “ you’ll hear and see in them Magic Glasses.”

QUILLE. Ha ! It’s more than music is in the glasses maybe ?

JAYMONY (*laughing*). Hold your tongue !—the seven wonders of the world, seas and mountains and cities, grand horses and carriages, and all the wild animals of the earth. Gold and white money you’d see in heaps. Palaces, with the finest furniture inside in them, the best of eating and drinking laid out on tables with the loveliest chaney—all that and more is to be seen in the three brown glasses. Then there’s the three red glasses, and the three blue glasses that makes up the set.

QUILLE. What’s in the three red glasses ?

JAYMONY. Women. Full of the pertiest women was ever seen on the globe. It’s myself got very fond of one of them, and maybe of two. And in the glass I could see myself and

the one I was doting on, and we together for the six days of the week. Times we'd be talking and times there wouldn't be a word out of us at all, our two mouths in one kiss and we in a sort of a daze. It's after saying I am we'd be together for the six days of the week. But that wouldn't satisfy us, and we'd be together for the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year ; and it wouldn't satisfy us, and for ages and ages we'd be in Tirnanogue, and it isn't satisfied we'd be still.

MAINEEN (*rushing forward*). You shameless thing ! Don't mind him, Mr. Quille, it's ravelling he is in his immoral talk.

PADDEN. Two months now since he was at church or chapel, and 'tis years since he seen a priest.

QUILLE (*rising and bending towards MAINEEN and PADDEN, who shrink back*). Them three blue glasses : in God's name what might be in them ?

JAYMONY (*excitedly*). Ha ! it's the rousing wonders is in them entirely. You'd see a dandy army in the grey of the night rising out of the dark glens, and the places where the herons do be screeching.

QUILLE (*rising suddenly*). The inspiration is coming on me, for I knew a sort of a poet—"Out of the mists they come," said he, "one by one—out of the mists and the fantastic quagmires of the South, their sabres gleaming in the light of the moon." (*Turning to JAYMONY.*) Isn't it them you see ?

JAYMONY. The same. (*In great excitement.*) Ah, but I seen more, for 'tis myself I see on a noble horse, spangled and grey ; I seen my own bright sabre flashing and I leading the army on, and we driving the Saxon invader before us—through the plains of Desmond, and on and on, even to the Eastern sea.

QUILLE (*flourishing arms*). The cloth ! The cloth ! It's getting convulsed I am ! It's getting convulsed I am !

[PADDEN and MAINEEN lay a sheet on floor.

QUILLE falls on his back on sheet, and works
as if in convulsions.

PADDEN. Holy Father ! Look at the two terrible eyes
rolling in his head, he having no sight in them at all and he
convulsed.

MAINEEN. 'Tis like a man of God he is, looking through
the rafters, and seeing, maybe, the dome of Paradise itself.

QUILLE. Jaymony, Jaymony Shanahan ! Let Jaymony
Shanahan drink one wineglassful of the bottle left on the
table by one Morgan Quille of Beenahorna—three times a day
let him drink one wineglass, in the morning and in the noon-
time and coming on the fall of night. And the price of that
bottle is four-and-six—(PADDEN fumbles in pocket, hands
money to MAINEEN, who slips it into QUILLE's hand)—and at
the dawn of day let Jaymony Shanahan hop on one leg and
make a bow East and West and North and South, and let
him pick fourteen red roses and make a garland with ferny
leaves and eglantine, and leave it on the thatch. (*Works
again in convulsions.*) Jaymony, Jaymony Shanahan ! Let
Jaymony Shanahan go turn the red earth every day will rise
over him seven hours between dawn and the time the sun goes
down, and in the dusk he'll ramble to the neighbours' houses
and discourse on cattle and on crops and all things on the
agricultural way. He'll go to market and to fair—take
drink—a little—and ketch a woman if he wants to when he
is coming home. On the twenty-first day a farmer's daughter
is to be made out for Jaymony Shanahan.

[*Works in convulsions.*

PADDEN. We never thought of a wife for him, Maineen.

MAINEEN. Hush, Padden ! The great man's jaws are
working towards speech.

QUILLE. Who is the woman to be made out for Jaymony

Shanahan ? A lovely woman for a man with four cows, no blemish on her beauty, but a slight impediment in her speech. The birthmarks on her are a pimple under her left ear, three black hairs on her buzzom and one brown. In Beenahorna this damsel does dwell, and on the twenty-first day—if Jaymony obey all the instructions given—one Morgan Quille will bring her to Jaymony Shanahan, and on the twenty-second day he'll be cured for ever and live in the grace of God.

JAYMONY (*clapping his hands*). Is it cured I am to be in the heel ? Is it cured I am to be in the heel ? (*Runs and takes up spade.*) I will go and turn the red earth ! I will go and turn the red earth !

[*Runs out.*

PADDEN (*running out.*) And I will rush and tell the neighbours the marvel of the world done for us this day.

[MAINEEN *goes and makes more punch ; she gives it to QUILLE, who rises ; he drinks and hands her back the tumbler.*

QUILLE. Off with me now and flaking up the long, long country to Beenahorna ; no time have I to waste, and a witch to prophesy my time was limited. Devils and curs would say 'tis myself invented the prophecy—devils and curs ! But I am telling you, my good woman, my time is limited, my time is limited.

[*Makes a spring out of the door.*

MAINEEN (*rushing to door*). Oh, Mr. Quille, God keep you a thousand years to work miracles—God keep you a thousand years ! (*She goes to fireplace. Re-enter JAYMONY ; she turns and sees him. Wringing her hands.*) For the love of God ! 'Tisn't renayging you are to turn the red earth ?

JAYMONY (*shrugging his shoulders*). Sick I got of turning it, a dismal feeling to come over me, after Thade Martin telling me my two brothers had arrived in the village, are giving out porter and the people making much of them.

MAINEEN. Did you hop on the leg itself ?

JAYMONY. I did not.

MAINEEN. Here, take the medicine in the name of God ! It might prevent the charm from being cancelled, and maybe after a while you'd go out and hop on that leg. Is it better you feel ?

JAYMONY. 'Tis better I feel.

MAINEEN. Thank God the charm isn't cancelled ! Go out now and hop on that leg in the name of God !

JAYMONY (*with sudden elation*). To-morrow I'll do it—
to-morrow I'll follow out all the instructions, and it's a great effort I'll make entirely—(*sighs*)—if it isn't too far gone I am to be cured by quackery or the power of man.

[PADDEN *re-enters with JUG and MARY. He goes to table and drinks whisky.*

PADDEN (*giving the women whisky*). Drink, Aunt Jug—
drink, Aunt Mary—'tisn't you should be to take a sup the glorious day that's in it. 'Tis in great blood I am, Maineen, I couldn't keep from waving my hat and shouting of the cure to the crowd of labourers on Peg Caxty's turnip garden.

AUNT JUG (*drinking*). Isn't it me screeched the good news to Jane Quinlan, the boolumshee that will spread the good news over the known world.

AUNT MARY (*drinking*). I found time to screech it to Marse Doolen over her half-door, grigging her I was and a hump on her own son, for 'tis often she was reflecting on Jaymony. [JAYMONY *slips up to top loft.*

MAINEEN. And maybe she'll reflect again and the cure not rightly working in him yet. Isn't it up in the top loft he is and playing the music itself ?

PADDEN. The villain of the world, it's now he has us scandalised. (*Going towards ladder.*) But maybe he don't know the courage the drop puts in a man. (*Catching ladder.*)

176 The Magic Glasses

Come down, will you, from your tingling and your jig-acting,
or I'll leather you within an inch of your life !

AUNT JUG and AUNT MARY. That's the style, Padden, up
to him and drill the devil out of him itself.

PADDEN. But I can't go up. I can't even raise a leg.
Holy Father, it's paralysed I am, and it must be the devil
himself is in the top loft !

AUNT JUG and AUNT MARY (*at ladder*). Mother of God,
save and shield us ! The devil himself above in the top
loft !

MAINEEN (*going to ladder*). What devil above in the top
loft ? It's drunk you're all and dazzled drunk itself. The
house is creaking—leave go the ladder, I'm saying, or you'll
pull the top loft down.

PADDEN. Holy Father ! Isn't it the way I can't let go
and I glued to it, Maineen ?

AUNT JUG and AUNT MARY. And likewise glued are we.

PADDEN. 'Tis the devil has us fast. Look through the top
loft door. Holy Father ! He's up on the table and having
every wheel about !

AUNT JUG and AUNT MARY. Mother of God ! On the
table and having every wheel about ! [Music in loft.]

MAINEEN. I'm telling you it's Jaymony is on the table,
and better let him be. For it's playing wild he is, and his
eyes gone curious mad.

PADDEN. It's a devil that's there, and a terrible devil too.

AUNT JUG and AUNT MARY. The devil surely.

PADDEN. Don't I see the horns and the horrid hoofs ?

AUNT JUG and AUNT MARY. We see the horns and the
horrid hoofs.

PADDEN. Brimstone I smell !

AUNT JUG and AUNT MARY. Brimstone we smell !

PADDEN. The flags of hell I see and the flames for ever !

AUNT JUG and AUNT MARY. The flags of hell we see and the flames for ever !

[*They sway about, clinging to ladder, MAINEEN still exhorting them to leave go and endeavouring to pull them away from it. Suddenly ladder gives way, and top loft tumbles down, PADDEN, MAINEEN, JUG and MARY falling on their backs, in different directions.*

PADDEN, AUNT JUG, AUNT MARY. In the name of God, we're kilt ! [They all get up.

MAINEEN (*observing JAYMONY'S legs, which are seen sticking up above debris of top loft*). More likely it's Jaymony is kilt. (*Goes to ruins of top loft. With considerable surprise, throwing her arms wide*). And he is kilt ! (*Bringing her hands together with a slap*) Glory be, if it isn't kilt entirely he is, and his jugular cut by the Magic Glasses !

PADDEN (*in terror and excitement*). In the name of God don't lay a hand to him, or it's taken up we'll be for murder, or manslaughter in the first degree. Leave him in the position he's in, Maineen, and start rising your lamentations, and likewise you, Aunt Jug. And let myself and Aunt Mary go running through the county, tearing our hair, and calling to the people, wide, the house fell down on Jaymony.

[PADDEN and AUNT MARY rush out.

PADDEN and AUNT MARY (*outside*). Our Jaymony is kilt ! the house fell down on Jaymony ! Our Jaymony is kilt ! the house fell down on Jaymony !

[MAINEEN and AUNT JUG commence to ullagone.

They keen louder and louder as tumultuous voices are heard approaching.

THE DANDY DOLLS

CHARACTERS

ROGER CARMODY.

CAUTH, *his wife.*

HIS CHILD.

GREY MAN.

HAG'S SON }
TIMMEEN } *boys.*

FATHER JAMES.

KEERBY, *the priest's clerk.*

HAG OF BARNA.

SCENE I.—*Interior of ROGER'S kitchen.* CAUTH is sitting at fire, knitting. Child on hob. Enter the GREY MAN humming “The Old Leathern Breeches.” Continues humming when he enters, and does some capers about floor to air, then shuts half-door.

GREY MAN. God bless you, lady! (Pause.) God bless, honest woman! (Pause.) Sour female, it's God bless I'm saying!

CAUTH. Oh, God bless! But if it's alms you're wanting, Grey fellow, I'm thinking you're come to the wrong shop. For there isn't meal in the house, or flour in the house, nor spuds in the house itself; in a manner there is nothing in the house but the red raw starvation, as might be plain to you by the cut of that ashy creature sitting there on the hob with the map of the world painted on his burnt spangled shins.

GREY MAN. God bless the child, I say! But it's no alms I come for, woman dear, or no reception in the line of lodging or of food. Indeed, it's himself I'm wanting, your darling husband, Mr. Roger Carmody; and is himself at home?

CAUTH. Himself is at home, but I'm thinking he's engaged.

GREY MAN (*with long intonation*). Engaged! What sort of talk is that in a cabin black with soot? Engaged! Sure a man could be engaged and could spare a little time.

CAUTH. He could if he wasn't my man, that has time and play-time and whips of time again, but still for want of time is in such a devil's own fix that he can't renayge himself to

put a sop in the thatch, fix a hoop in that leaking oven, or settle a pot-hooks on which to hang the pot. He don't earn as much as a shilling in the week, and all the same he's engaged, sir, and always engaged is he.

GREY MAN. That's like a riddle you'd hear from a child—I went to the wood and I picked a thorn, riddle-me-riddle-me-ree.

CAUTH (*sourly*). A sore subject I'd be riddling on, then, that booby man of mine ; for may the devil fly away with the day he drew on him that practice of making dandy dolls. Isn't he well engaged, glory be God ?

GREY MAN (*sitting down opposite CAUTH*). So it seems. (*With a sniff.*) And isn't it a funny fancy game for a spade-man stuck in gripes ? Capers ?

CAUTH. Capers ! Notions ! A hobby, moryah ! to keep him on the hearth, and he addicted to going marauding after poultry in the dark.

GREY MAN. A holy thought, faith, if it's gay itself.

CAUTH. A holy thought ! A fitter thing for him to exert himself in a proper labouring man, earn his coin for himself, and 'tisn't thinking of robbing he would be, with the tasby flattened in him when the night would come.

GREY MAN. 'Tis you that's right.

CAUTH. 'Tis me that's right. But where's the good, and a bosthoon he ? What harm—glory be to God !—but them dolls the biggest torment to him in the world. For the Hag's Son is against them to the death, and so sure as Roger makes a doll, so sure will the Hag's Son, soon or late, come at it, give it a knuckle in the navel, split it in two fair halves, collar the windpipe, and off with him carrying the squeaky-squeak.

GREY MAN. Roger raging ?

CAUTH. Roger raging. Fit to stick. Teetotally mad

itself. But, worse than all, after a doll is diddled, nothing for him but his plundering chase again.

GREY MAN. From sheer disappointment?

CAUTH. From sheer disappointment. That's his excuse, and he'd be saying he'd be the honest man entirely if he could keep his doll from the power of the Barna brat; that he has such a grah for a dandy doll there wouldn't be a stir out of him while she would be fornenst him—he peeping at her delighted, and she sweet-smiling upon the clevvy. But 'tis equal which, for he isn't able to save his dolls, and isn't he the biggest looney not to stop his booby game?

GREY MAN. He is, partly.

CAUTH. Partly! Only partly!

GREY MAN. Partly. For if he robs a share itself, I'll engage them dolls have improved him generally in the line of virtue and of grace.

CAUTH. You'll engage them dolls have improved him generally in virtue and in grace? Faith, you'll engage no such thing, and though he is forty years at dolls, what occurred to him no further back than Thursday week—what occurred to him but to have him lep up in the bed to me in the middle of the night, sir, sweat pouring down off him after he waking out of a luscious dream, and there he commenced bawling till you'd think his heart would break lamenting all the opportunities he lost of collaring this and that in the line of fancy poultry the time he was a child, when no one suspected him, and he making rack there wasn't a thing in the world for him to come at now but the priest's geese!

GREY MAN. A sort of fit?

CAUTH. A sort of fit. A spasm. An unholy spasm that never left him surely until the break of day. Likewise the devil a bit the better is he in the line of health. For, mind you, big as the mind he has for poultry, they never with his

stomach would agree. But he was fairly before he started them dandy dolls—the time he'd take a notion for a bird and out the door he'd go. He'd have his little stew. He might get a change after it—a bit dull in himself—yawning and the like. But no alarm, no distress, unless some furry variations that would come upon his tongue.

GREY MAN. Crawsick ?

CAUTH. Crawsick—a thing could happen a man after a little booze. But 'tis different since, for, if them dolls do keep him in a bit itself, 'tis treble as ravenous he does be when he goes marauding on the new. And often I seen him lick three geese in one almighty feed, his jaws going like a horse, he crunching and munching, and from the neck to the pope's nose there wouldn't be as much in the carcass left after him as would blind the eye of a Tommy Blue. Nor would that satisfy him, for, after all being over, 'tis many a time the baiſht would turn around from that table there and, shameless to the world, call for the six loppeens.

GREY MAN. Game to the heel ?

CAUTH. Game to the heel. Ah, but my hand to you ! he'd pay for his game, and in a bully soon time too. He'd be having the haycups, and there would come from him every belch. He'd be a show in the bed—a rattle—God save the hearers !—a rattle, and it going on in his guts.

GREY MAN. Is it going on all night ?

CAUTH. Going on all night. All the first night. For maybe 'tis the night after he'd be getting them sort of chills, when he'd be as cold as a dead pig, that was kilt, washed, shaved, and hanging on the gallows for twenty-four hours. And he'd be thumming himself, and he'd be scratching himself, trying to rise a heat, and there wouldn't be a stitch in the house but he'd have rolled about himself ; but if you put a ton weight itself down on top of him 'twouldn't take that

chill from his bones, and his teeth never stopping going like that.

[*Chatters.*]

GREY MAN (*chattering*). Never stopping going like that?

CAUTH. Never stopping going like that.

GREY MAN (*shaking his head*). Faith, that was bad.

CAUTH. That was bad and very bad itself. But, bad as it was, worse was to happen to him before there would come back to him again the heart or the spirit or the tasby of a man. And for nights—for several nights indeed—the devil a kick would be out of him at all and he stiff. I'd be listening for a sound—no sound; I'd be feeling for his heart—no heart. Well, glory be to God, Grey Man, 'tis often I'd swear all the oaths in Ireland it's a pure corpse I had in him, and, fainting and shivering, it's by a struggle I'd crawl over him and out of the bed in the heel. I'd light the candle and I'd look at him, and it wouldn't be wishing to you to look at him and the cut of him in that hour, and he lying on the flat of his back, his eyes open in that sleep, his mouth open, but no breath coming ; and no sort of expression on him was ever seen on the face of a Christian, but something in the shape of a damn ugly smile.

GREY MAN. Woful suffering.

CAUTH. Woful suffering. And woful suffering is all the benefit he has from his trumpery dandy dolls, we starved ; and there is that leaking oven, and there is that hole in the thatch, and there we are without a pot-hooks on which to hang the pot. Lord above ! isn't it the pity of the world I am with him surely, a mangy vomiting snooker itself to have beside me in the bed these forty years and more !

GREY MAN. I can feel for you, and I felt for you before we ever met. For it's far and distant newses wander of the failings and the follies of a man. Faith, there's ballads sung about him in our quarter, and 'tis the youngsters itself could give you a flourishing account of Roger and his dandy dolls.

Indeed, 'tis a great pity you are entirely, but I'll engage now—God bless the tears!—you find great relief from giving that share of talk.

CAUTH (*harshly*). How simple I'd find relief in a share of talk! But if it's scoffing you are, such jokes don't match your beard, old fairy, or whatever you are, and wherever you rose out of this haunted eve of May.

GREY MAN. Faith, out of a briny spot, then, a place where periwinkles are plenty, and there is dilisk thrown in heaps.

CAUTH (*drawing back her chair in terror*). God knows, maybe 'tis the way you are really something queer! You're as white as Father Christmas, but, all the same, now that I take stock of you, I see there is a horrid cut about you I never seen in any ancient person in all the townlands bounding round this melted boggy spot.

GREY MAN. Why, then, I'm thought uncommon noble by the mermaids near my home, and 'tis they are the damsels keep a sharp look out for beauty and a handsome form, they brittle—half in bits—from the luscious thoughts of love.

CAUTH (*deliberately*). 'Tis the way you are surely something queer, and, maybe, 'tis for some devil's purpose you were nudging me to blab about my man. But, bad as he is, 'tisn't the traitor I'd be acting to him in the heel, and 'tis little would make me give you that fist right in your grizzled pus. (*He puts hands on her knees; she tries to draw away from him.*) In the name of all that's good what pinching have you there?

GREY MAN. Be easy now, and civil, most virtuous matron fair. And, though I'm a jolly sort of fellow when out for the day, faith, 'tisn't you, poor wrinkled screed, that would entice me to embrace you in your chair!

CAUTH. Let go my knees, I'm telling you. Glory be! A man I never seen before or don't know what's his name!

GREY MAN. Counihan, then—one of the Counihans of the Isle of Doon. Martin I am, the youngest, for there is my elder brother James, and my father, old Mohoon. We do great business in the trumpery way, we make baubles for the globe, in a manner we are bauble makers to the King and Queen of Spain.

CAUTH. That's a bully make.

GREY MAN. The devil a make. (*Handing her paper.*) And here's will tell you something and maybe something more.

CAUTH (*reading*). "By royal appointment to the King and Queen of Spain. The Messrs. Counihan beg to intimate to the mainland people that, as usual, they are purchasing home-made trumperies, and especially are prepared to give bully prices for purty well-built dandy dolls." Is it prizes for dandy dolls?

GREY MAN. Prizes for dandy dolls.

CAUTH (*suspiciously*). Then it's about the dolls you came. Well I knew, old shaver, 'twas about the dolls you came.

GREY MAN. Smart enough you spotted it, faith, you pleasant polite dame. Still, if you know more than your prayers 'tisn't the Counihans you should blame. For 'twas the sore day to us we offered them prizes, all through your husband man ; with the Hag's Son coming to the mainland cliff right fornenst our home, and flinging the windpipes of Roger's dolls right down into the sea. Calling for his prizes he does be, the little blackguard brat, screeching laughing, and he turning every somersault for himself on the slippery green above. Shamed he has us, a peepshow itself to the laughing people passing by to Mass ; in a manner we're in three gazaybos that were feared, respected, and venerated men. He has old Mohoon totally off his stems, his white head up day and night with fury going through his beard like

a whirlwind through a bush. And brother James is worse, his feet all gored and bruised to bits from dancing raging hornpipes on stumps of rocks and stones. And now, isn't that a purty fix for you from Roger's dandy dolls ?

CAUTH. A purty fix, old shaver, and the devil fix you too, for that's what brought you here to fix it with my man.

GREY MAN. Is it me fix him—me the most innocent poor slob in the world ? I wouldn't hurt a bee. I'm only as you might say the garsoon, the messenger from James and old Mohoon. But there is more in that. Isn't there "warning" in it ?

CAUTH (*reading*). There is "warning." (*Reading slowly.*) "Warning . . ."

GREY MAN. "It having come to the knowledge of the Messrs. Counihan . . ."

CAUTH (*reading*). "It having come to the knowledge of the Messrs. Counihan, that the generality of the mainland people are nothing short of being a pack of the biggest thieves, rogues, and robbers, diddling each other at fairs over horses with blind eyes, cows with paralysed udders, and so on in the line of blemishes, the Messrs. Counihan hereby give strict notice that if any person dare attempt to pass off on them a faulty or defective doll, they will soon and sudden take measures to chastise the thieving plunderers ; in a manner they will rise every blister on his dirty yellow hide." (*Smiling*). On his dirty yellow hide ?

GREY MAN. On his dirty yellow hide. You like that ?

CAUTH. I like that.

GREY MAN. No harm in that, says you, but maybe a deal of good.

CAUTH (*gleefully*). My very thought. And my apologies to you, Grey Man, if my talk was cross or queer. Glory above ! isn't it forty years wishing I am to see him tanned

like that, and 'tis myself will hold him by the ears while you let his breeches down, and, with every wallop and flamm you'll give, I'll screech my loud hurrah ! Faith, I'll call him in to you now, Grey Man, with a heart and more than a half.

[Rises. Goes towards door.

GREY MAN (*sticking out his tongue and taking out of pocket an enormous black bottle which he slips furtively inside his overcoat*). You're fine ; you're thorough game itself, and upon my soul I love you more than all the dames of Doon.

CAUTH. Well, surely you're a droll fellow, old merryman so gay. (*Calling from doorstep.*) Roger-a-Roger-aboo-oo !

GREY MAN. Was that snarl from a dog ?

CAUTH. That snarl was from himself, out in the linnhe, the chronic ! and he up to his ears this minute in making a brand-new dandy doll. For it's worse than a surly mastiff he is the time he does be manufacturing ; and if a warrant rubbed a hair to him he'd make a ferocious grin at you that wouldn't shame the old boy himself that's below in the pit of hell. (*Calling.*) Roger ! Roger ! Aboo-oo ! Roger ! Roger ! Aboo-oo ! (*Running to hearth.*) Here he comes hopping, and, Lord ! the countenance of the devil with the temper flying out of his two eyes.

[*She sits down. Enter ROGER rapidly.*

ROGER. In the name of God, is it in the other world I was, with yourself and your dinner-calls ? The devil's cure to you for a bog-lark, what a burst of music comes from you in the heel of the day, the people raising their heads and gaping at you from far and near ! The Lord be thanked my doll was finished, for there's a rasp in your cracked old windpipe that would frighten a horse from his oats, and many a time that same old screamer was the means of my making a faulty doll.

CAUTH. Now it's me is doing the harm, is it ? But a time your old grandmother was the obstacle, not alluding to

the day you aimed a pratie at her and hit her on that woful polypus she had upon her nose. And what about Peg, and the time you used pull her by the hair of the head all round the kitchen floor ?—your sister Peg I'm alluding to, crippled Peg with the crooked eye.

ROGER. Lies and damn lies !

CAUTH. Neither lies nor damn lies, and well it becomes you to be throwing the blame on more, you craven thing, hiding under the bed for yourself the time the Hag's Son would be coming onward on his prowl, leaving the tussle to Timmeen Faley, that little friend of yours that's always to the fore !

ROGER. More lies, for it's well yourself knows I used fight and struggle till I could fight no more. Timmeen, moryah ! Timmeen is willing surely, but Timmeen is devilish weak.

CAUTH. Oh, glory, after all he done for you, the graceful nice garsoon ! What harm if it's ever a bullseye you brought him from a pattern or a fair ? But you're dirty mean and craven, and thankless now to boot.

ROGER. Peg away, old hairpin ; but you'll fail this turn, whatever, to put me in a wax. For the joy of the world is in me over my new dandy doll. As sound as black oak it is, thanks be to God ! (*Flourishes doll.*) Look at it so charming in its bib so gay. It's the finest doll I ever made, Cauth of the ugly snout !

CAUTH. That was the way with every doll the time when it was new. The last perfection always ; no blemish on that, moryah ! different altogether from all that went and fell before.

ROGER. I'm telling you there never was the beat of this.

CAUTH. And I'm telling you tell it first to the gallant horse marines.

ROGER (*in a rage*). Psh ! it's a gom I am to be bothering

my napper with a poisoned whelp that the devil can't put a stop to ballyragging and clawfshawning from New Year's Day till New Year's Day again.

CAUTH. He turns it when he's beat. But what are you after now? Heavenly Father, 'tisn't fixing that doll you are in the place we eat our meals?

ROGER. I am, then, and with good tenpenny nails I'm fixing it itself. A deal a firmer place than the clevvy, woman, a place I'll have a view of it let me turn what way I will. 'Tisn't I'm afraid of this doll getting a knuckle or fifty knuckles itself, but to make it safer still I'll plant my dandy here.

CAUTH. Our fine table all destroyed! The only respectable thing in the house itself! Well, glory be to God, from Hell to Bedlam was there ever the match of you for a looney fool? (*Smiles.*) But, whisper! this Grey Man wants a talk with you if I rightly understand.

ROGER (*turning around and looking at GREY MAN intently*). Isn't it you I seen before? Where was it at all, or was it about the time I was turning into a man?

GREY MAN. It could be.

ROGER. Where was this it was? There comes before me huge cliffs and a darksome sea.

GREY MAN. The identical spot, then, and by the same token 'twas gone a quarter of the Christmas moon.

ROGER. 'Tis now I recollect. (*Drawing back in terror.*) Glory be to God, then, who is it? Glory be to God, 'tisn't one of the three Grey Men you are, who dwell in that rock in the heart of the fearsome bay of Doon, and come out on the battlements terrifying the people when the sea is roaring in the wild and dreary nights?

GREY MAN (*pleasantly*). Faith, then, it's one of them I am.

ROGER. And what might you want with me, hoary man of the ocean ?

GREY MAN (*handing bottle to ROGER*). To give you a bottle. And if the Hag's Son whips the squeak from your new dandy doll, that mortal minute you'll drink the full of this. And he'll make for the doll this night itself at the hour of ten o'clock, for we are men can read the stars and prophesy of things that are to be.

ROGER. The doll is safe, but whether or which wherefore should I drink ?

GREY MAN. Your woman knows the wherefore and you'll soon know the why. But draw the cork from it, man, smell to it, it is sound and it is sweet.

ROGER (*drawing cork and smelling*). Ptse ! it's a rotten scent is from it, glory be to God ! It's poison it is, and, win or lose, I'll not drink it, Grey Man from the sea.

GREY MAN. You'll drink it and no thanks. For, if you dar resist, we have engines yonder would spatter a water-spout around your ears while you'd be asking the loan of a sack, or maybe 'tis a 'potamus we'd send up to your hall-door to you that would take you in one gobble and, before you knew what o'clock was it, would sweep you holus-bolus to the bottom of the deep. Well, that's my message given, and now I must be going, for my time is running short. (*To CAUTH, who purses up lips and stares sourly in direction of auditorium.*) It grieves me sore to part, love, but we'll meet again in the gay soon time ; so don't weep, my winsome purty, my beauteous fairy queen !

[*Strokes beard. Pulls out a little mirror and looks at himself. Puts mirror back in pocket. Whistles very softly "The Old Leathern Breeches," capering to air. Goes out and hums the air as he disappears.*

CAUTH. Doll-di-do, this is what comes of the dandy dolls. (*Rises, goes to ROGER.*) And hammer away now, you mortal coward, but the sweat in lumps is clammy on your brow, and your two cheeks is the colour of the clay.

ROGER. What way is it for you, woman, to be tormenting me now? Sure, if I was talking brave about my doll itself, what was it but to keep the heart in bloom, while all the time there was a little doubt, and, like 'twould be in the air, for weeks past something was foreshowing me the calamity of this woful hour. For it's as queer in myself I felt as ever I did after a topping feed of goose, the brain dull, a ton weight in every limb, and I walking the ground, and I couldn't lep the height of a sod of turf; the strangest things coming into my head; it's a fit of crying I got itself seeing the youngsters playing in Barton's field—it brought back to me so piercing the time I was likewise gay and hearty, tasby in me and high glee. But now it's miserable I do be, and dreary always, and 'tis God himself knows what mournful thoughts were brewing in me all through the Ree-Hee days. (*Hammers, then throws hammer aside on table.*) 'Tis no more hammering I can do, or battling I can do neither. Cauth, the heart and soul is gone out of me entirely, and there isn't the strength of a rush in my four bones.

CAUTH (*smelling to bottle*). Whist now, maybe 'tisn't poison is in it at all. There is a heavy fume from it surely; still it might only be something will put you to sleep. But, whatever it is, Father James and his clerk are outside on the road, and rub the towel to your face for fear 'tis a notion they'd take to come in. Jawing they are, and 'tis like a dispute between them, the priest striving to bring Keerby this way, and Keerby wanting not.

[*Turns away from window.*

CHILD (*from door*). Keerby has got away from him,

mother. Oh J, the priest is after him again! Oh J, he has him by the ear! Oh J, he's driving him before him and rising every kick on his behind! By J, though, but Keerby is making tapes to pull away from him! Jaymini, they're leppin! Oh J, here they are full tally! Keerby and the priest himself, by J!

[Runs to fire.

CAUTH. Then where are my 'lastics—Lord, where are my 'lastic boots?

[Hides in corner.

ROGER. And the dickens where's that skillet—the dickens where's that towel?

[*Throws cloth over doll and stoops behind table.*

Enter FATHER JAMES, dragging KEERBY after him. They have a gun and a dog.

FATHER JAMES. Well, isn't it the show of the world I am with you, you stump of insubordination? Is there a priest in Ireland would put up with you itself, as bold as a pig, rising your voice cantankerous, and darring for to thwart me in my wishes and the way I want to go?

KEERBY. Sure 'tisn't striving to thwart you I am, your reverence. Isn't it for your own good I'm advising you, whatever'll become of your poultry not to have hand, act, or part in this man's dandy dolls? The world knows that in ways you're a man of the old times; but, faith, things is different, and if the Bishop hears of your capers maybe 'tis to pack you off he would to the wildest parish in the County Kerry, with sea on one side of you, and every day a fish Friday from Michaelmas to June!

FATHER JAMES. Tut for the bishop. Tut for the bishop, I'm saying, for amn't I a solid parish priest? and he dar say black your eye to me while I keep within the rules and regulations of Holy Church.

KEERBY. Why, then, that's the question, and if he wouldn't settle you himself, he might do worse. And maybe

it's reported to Rome you'd be and excommunicated *per omnia saecula saeculorum.*

FATHER JAMES. As there never was a law made against what I'm going to do in any Council of the Church, even in the Council of Trent itself, so that if I am reported to Rome, Mr. Bartholomew Keerby, by the time the Cardinals have settled the point I'm telling you there won't be many grey hairs left in your head, Mr. Bartholomew Keerby, or many grey hairs left in my head, Mr. Bartholomew Keerby, if there'll be a grey rib left in them at all itself.

KEERBY. So be it, your reverence, but I wished you'd let me absent myself whatever, as I don't want to have cut, shuffle, or deal with this man or his dandy dolls. There is a bad name on this house ; in a manner the childer go a mile of a round to avoid it. A blue light does be seen there all night, and 'tis said a small little man with a jim-crow hat appears on the top of the chimley regular every Christmas eve. Sure, why not, and devilment of course in them dandy dolls, and it well known that when Roger was a garsoon two black ravens would perch upon his shoulder every morning would rise over him and he marching off to school.

FATHER JAMES. So it's yourself is troubling you, you speechifying to me of Church law, and your thoughts all the time full of pagan pishogues ! But isn't it as bold as the devil you are itself, and to dar spout them fables fornenst a man of my cloth ! (*Loudly.*) But no more of it, I'm telling you. (*Gives him a push.*) Get along there—do your part in this business, and give me no more of your gab. Where's the people of this house, I'm saying, where's the people of this house ? [CAUTH comes forward. ROGER rises.

CAUTH. Oh, welcome, your reverence ; welcome kindly, Father James.

FATHER JAMES. Don't be welcoming me, sour woman ;

don't be welcoming me with that face on you like a high-fiddle, for 'tisn't welcomes I want from the thieves of the world, and it known to me at last the dog-fox which breaks into my backyard in the dead hour of the night. Roger Carmody, where are my geese ?

ROGER. Your geese is ate. As your reverence knows the culprit, you might as well know that.

FATHER JAMES. Oh, you gulletter ! oh, you panderer to the cravings of your dirty guts ! Worse you are than the heretics itself, that think a good suit of clothes the best recommendation to a front seat in Glory ; worse you are than the heretics, I'm saying, for you are foul outside as well as inside, and you have lost Paradise by stealing my geese.

ROGER. Jesus, forgive me ! Jesus, forgive me !

FATHER JAMES. Hypocrites, don't be blaspheming the holy name, and the feathers in your tick and the feathers in your bolster, the pluck from my old geese and the pluck from my old ganders ! Ah, isn't it little would make me say them words would paralyse you on the mortal spot ; and too long you have been running surely, corrupting the people, their mouths watering, and they passing by your half-door with the hot fumes coming out to them of the roast goose and the boiled goose, of the gravy and the giblet soup.

ROGER. God knows, then, Father James, 'tis the piercing sorrowful man I am I ever put a tooth in a goose.

FATHER JAMES. Sorrow me eye ! Will that restore to me my poultry, or keep your hands off the new clutch of goslings I got from the Curtaynes ? Will it keep you itself from stealing my fine young grey goose with the cuck on her that lays an egg for my breakfast all the mornings of the week ? Sorrow me eye ! Keep your sorrow for your guts, man, and fetch me that dandy doll I hear talks of. Fetch me the dandy doll 'tis said there is to be a battle about to-night, for if there

is power in dolls to put you from stealing my geese, believe you me, I'll make a doll of it ; in a manner I'm going to baptize it a good Catholic by the grace of God ! Amn't I saying, fetch me the dandy doll ?

CAUTH. Faith, she's right fornenst your reverence, if he'll only shift. (*To ROGER.*) Will you shift, I'm telling you, or is it shy or ashamed you are to let his reverence see the doll, or is it daft and dazzled you are entirely ? Will you shift again ? The dickens to you, and shift ! (*Shoves ROGER aside and takes cloth off doll.*) There she is, your reverence, as large as life.

FATHER JAMES. My soul, she's fairly sweet ! Well, Missis, what name shall I put on her, if you please ?

CAUTH (*moving away*). Faith, you'll not put any name on her from me, your reverence ; and let what will happen, I wouldn't acknowledge that bauble for daughter of mine, or have her called after one of my breed, if you were baptizing her from this till Michaelmas itself.

ROGER. Here's the holy water, your reverence, and don't mind that dreary whelp. Call the doll after my Aunt Jug.

FATHER JAMES. So be it, then, and Jug shall be her name. (*Baptizes doll.*) There, now, she's sanctified and sacramental sound, a match for all the hags and hags' sons from Barna to Kanturk. In holy armour, therefore, she's ready for the fray. And we'll be here to see it, Keerby ; we'll come back to see the battle—faith, we'll come to see the sport. But, now, we want a corncrake to make a new mayfly. Away with us, we'll meet her back to dinner ! And, whist ! she's screeching ! Gayk-Gayk ! Gayk-Gayk ! she's in Curtin's rushy glen.

[*Exeunt FATHER JAMES and KEERBY.*

CAUTH. We didn't think of telling the priest about the Grey Man, but I suppose it don't signify as he has baptized the doll. I'll bolt the door, for maybe the Hag's Son could

be kept out altogether now, after the priest putting a blessing on the house. (*Comes and sits at fire opposite ROGER.*) Take a doze for yourself to freshen you, and I'll take a doze for myself likewise, till 'tis near the battling hour. Well, 'twill be a great blessing if the Hag's Son fails, for they say if he is once cowarded he's done, and you'll be able to go to work to-morrow for yourself with the help of God—nine shillings a week, I hear, and great scoff at Horan's; then there is that sop to be put in the thatch, and a hoop for that leaking oven, and you must settle the pot-hooks, Roger, on which to hang the pot.

[CAUTH and ROGER doze. They snore. CHILD sings "*Oh, then, buttercups and daisies, and daisies and buttercups,*" to the air of "*I'd mourn the hopes that leave me,*" and curtain falls.

SCENE II.—*As curtain rises CAUTH and ROGER are still sleeping. It is within a minute of ten o'clock.*

CHILD (*playing marbles on floor*). Into my first of nothing, into my second of nothing, into my last of thaw—game! (*Chalks a circle on floor and plays another game.*) Pinked! That's a button won. No! By J, I'm fat! (*Singing.*) "Oh, then, buttercups and daisies, etc." (*Looks at clock.* CAUTH and ROGER wake up.) Tick-tack! Tick-tack!

CAUTH. Stop, you ashy creature, hasn't the Hag's Son ears would hear a sound like that full fifty miles and more? So stop your tick-tack, for it might be will of God he'd forget the hour and maybe fall asleep. [Clock strikes.

CHILD. Dong! Dong! Dong!

Voice (*outside*). Open ! Open ! Open, open, quick !

Cauth. Stop outside now, you spawn of a mountainy hag !
Stop outside now, be off and take your hook !

Voice (*outside*). It's me. It's Timmeen Faley. Open in
the name of God ! The Hag's Son is coming in one swoop
down from the Barna hills.

[Cauth *opens door*. Timmeen comes in. Hag's
Son comes down from room.]

Cauth (*to Hag's Son*). The Hag's Son ! You villain, is
it in a slit in the window you came, or down a hole in the
thatch ?

Hag's Son. Find out if you're fit, and give me none of
your vulgar speech. Or is it the way you mistake me for
your sweet bolster man ? You green and withered female,
I might give you a handsome pinch. (*Pinches her arm. She screams. He faces Timmeen.*) Good little boy, Timmeen,
good little boy. I'd put a finger in your eye, Timmeen
Faley.

Timmeen. Your talk is bold, Jackeen, the brat from Barna,
but your pride might get a fall and your tail be under you
when the who shall's finished for the dandy doll.

Hag's Son. Is it himself will diddle me half-dozing in his
chair ; or is it herself will diddle me and she quavering after
that pinch ; or is it you, you little dribbler, will diddle me
with only the breath left in you after that spell of the black
north wind ? Oh, Lord ! look at the cut of him, with his little
snuffle, his two dead blue eyes flat inside in his head, his little
mouth half-open and the couple of ugly teeth showing them-
selves stuck in his lips ; and it's you think yourself a match
for me, you mangy puny thing—(*loudly*) a match for me, my
chest a plate, my hands as hard as steel, every joint as supple
as whalebone, and (*wheeling and turning about*) I've the fingers
and toes of a midwife, as my gay old mother says.

TIMMEEN. 'Tis laughing I am, and you not knowing I have twenty points in my favour, and the priest after baptizing the dandy doll.

HAG'S SON (*laughing shrilly*). A spit for his baptizing, for my old mother, the Hag, took the virtue out of it, and she, the minute he shook the holy water, giving me a puff of her breath in between the two eyes that blew me in a balloon right over the highest peak of the Barna hills. Likewise it's coming herself she is to help her darling son. Ha-ha ! is it now you have the points in your favour ? Ha-ha ! it's now you're getting in dread.

TIMMEEN (*brandishing fist in HAG'S SON'S face*). Up to your pus, Jackeen, if I am, up to your pus ! I'm as good as yourself, by damned, and I'm ready for the fray !

HAG'S SON. On for the battle, then, for Fontenoy and glory ! On for the battle, then, and this is the way to smadher the grace of priest or parson !

TIMMEEN. And this is the way to break the melt in Jackeen, the brat from Barna.

[*They rush at doll. They drag it off table. They wheel about trying to take it from each other.*
Re-enter PRIEST and KEERBY.

FATHER JAMES. The battle is raging. (*Handing gun to KEERBY.*) Here, hold that gun, till I make the sign of the cross, read from the book, and drive that Hag's Son up the chimley in one mortal flame of fire. (*Reads from book.*) You won't go up the chimley, you won't ? Let us see what will come of a clout of a fist.

[*Makes at HAG'S SON and misses him.*

CAUTH. That's the style, your reverence, murder him, ruin him ; but keep me from the power of the Hag and I'll spoil him with the broom, I will.

KEERBY (*standing near dresser*). And I'll make a shy at

him with the stock of the gun when he comes around to where I am.

[*The fight continues, all going around in a ring.*

CAUTH and the priest make efforts to hit the HAG's Son, who dodges them. Sound of a lively jig being played on a fife outside.

CAUTH (*in terror*). The Hag, the Hag herself ! The Hag, the Hag of Barna !

[*Enter HAG playing a flute. She is a fantastically dressed old woman.*

THE HAG (*taking flute from mouth*). Ha-ha ! is it flammimg my little boy they are ? (*Hits CAUTH with flute.*) Take that, old snotty nose ! go wash your rotten rags and grease your creaking bones !

CAUTH. I'm kilt !

THE HAG (*hitting priest*). Ha-ha, shiny green coat, I have slaughtered a flay on the nape of your neck ! (*Hits him again.*) Take that on the small of your back and scratch yourself !

FATHER JAMES (*itching himself*). Botheration ! In the name of the Father !

THE HAG (*to her son*). Fight away, my gamey boy ; fight away, my hearty. Your mother is up to your ear—(*singing*) and we'll rise a grand song and we'll rise a grand tune, going back to our home in Barna.

FATHER JAMES (*snatching broom from CAUTH*). Give me that broom ; no haunted hag shall daunt me ; fight, slash, and batter—the power of man shall conquer the power—the power of the witch ! [They go round in a ring as before, fighting.

ROGER (*rising suddenly from seat near fire*). They are treenahayla and striking wild. Priest, Cauth, and Keerby, it's walloping Timmeen ye are, and thinking you're striking the Hag and the Hag's Son. Divilment, divilment, you're blinked by divilment ! Be careful in the name of God ! will

ye be careful in the name of God ! (HAG'S SON *captures doll.*) He has it ! Lord, he has it ! Sure he had to have it, and where's the good in talking, and all to no use, for it's foredoomed I was, it's foredoomed I was. (HAG'S SON *pulls out windpipe and blows through it.*) But isn't it fierce all the same, and wherefore should this wrong thing be ? But to hell with everything, I don't care, and by damned I'll have a goose ! (Enter GREY MAN *unperceived.* He goes to other side of table opposite ROGER.) Or a duck, a fat duck—I must have a duck ! (Moving jaws as if in eating.) No, by Jabers, it's a turkey I must have, a good plump turkey ! Oh, Lord, the turkey and the gravy fine ! (Sees GREY MAN.) Ah, the Grey Man, the Grey Man !

[GREY MAN, with grim smile, points to bottle.

ROGER takes hold of it slowly. He puts it to his mouth, shaking like an aspen. He drinks. An explosion. Semi-darkness on stage. Noise as of a struggle. Dim figures of GREY MAN, ROGER, HAG, and HAG'S SON seen going out, ROGER being dragged along. Total darkness. HAG and HAG'S SON heard singing "My Bonnie Irish Boy." Song dies away in distance. Stage clears.

FATHER JAMES. Is any one kilt ?

KEERBY. 'Tis a wonder we aren't and all devils here.

FATHER JAMES. Give me that gun, you awkward man.

KEERBY. Faith, the gun is innocent, whatever that bottle did he had in his mouth, for, after the report, didn't the bottom of it open like it would on a hinge, and what did I see inside but a batch of the finest horses, black as jet, with red eyes on them, prancing and pawing, fit to be off. The next minute what happened but out they galloped to me in a bully army, and captains, generals, soldiers, with their

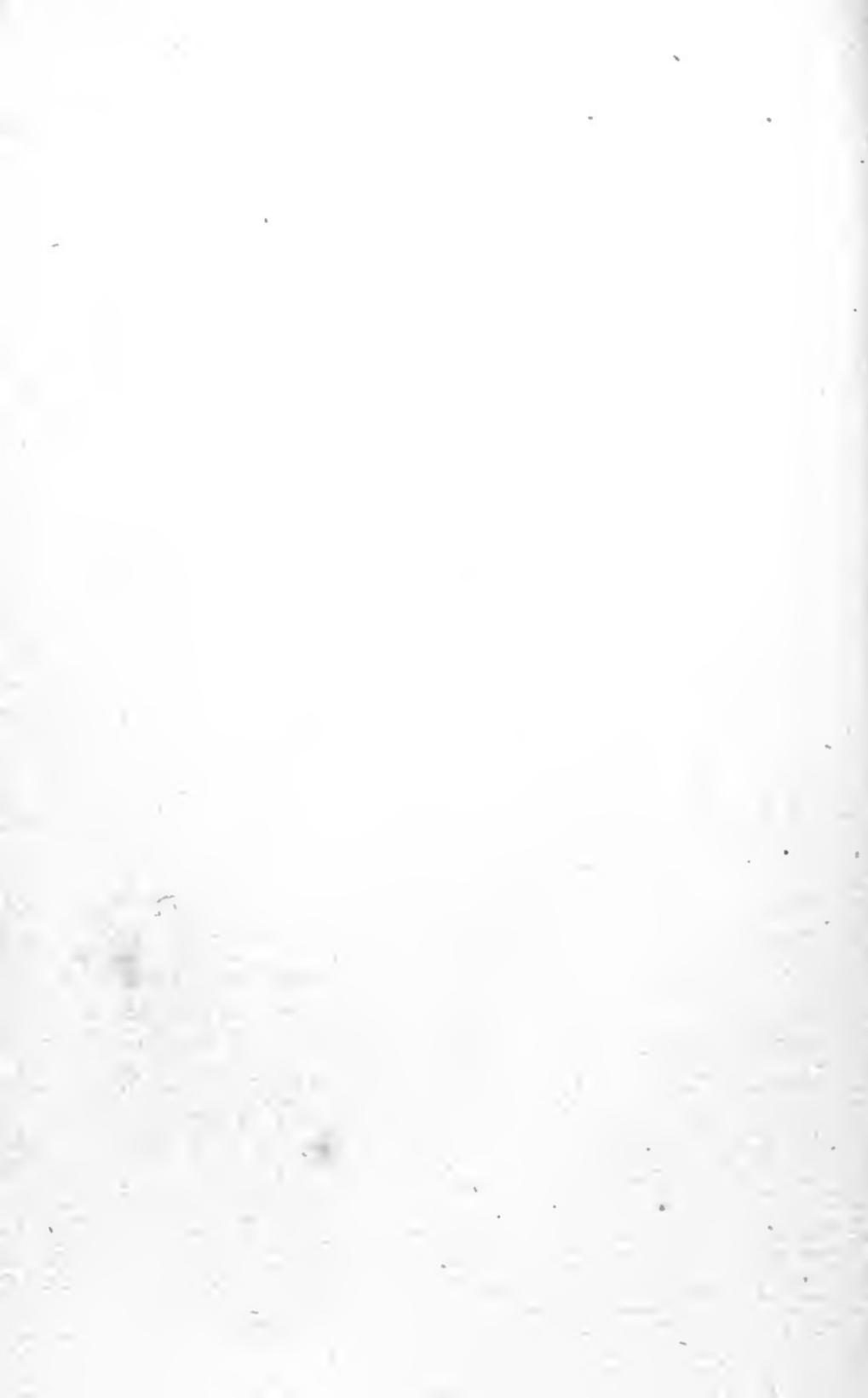
cannons, swords, and carabines, all in full bloom for war.
Faith, this is no house for an honest man. [Exit.]

CAUTH (*rising as if in pain, from prostrate condition*). Bad scran to him ! it's scratched and ruined I am on account of him, and there isn't a screed on me but is destroyed and tore. (*Looking about her vacantly.*) But the meila murdhre is over, and there isn't a trace of himself on the floor. The doll gone too ; and mustn't it have been the rotten doll itself, when your reverence couldn't save it by the power of your calling, and the grace drawn down from the holy heavens above ?

FATHER JAMES. 'Tis mysterious surely, and fantastic strange. Well, there's no more to be done, and I might as well be following Keerby. [Re-enter KEERBY.]

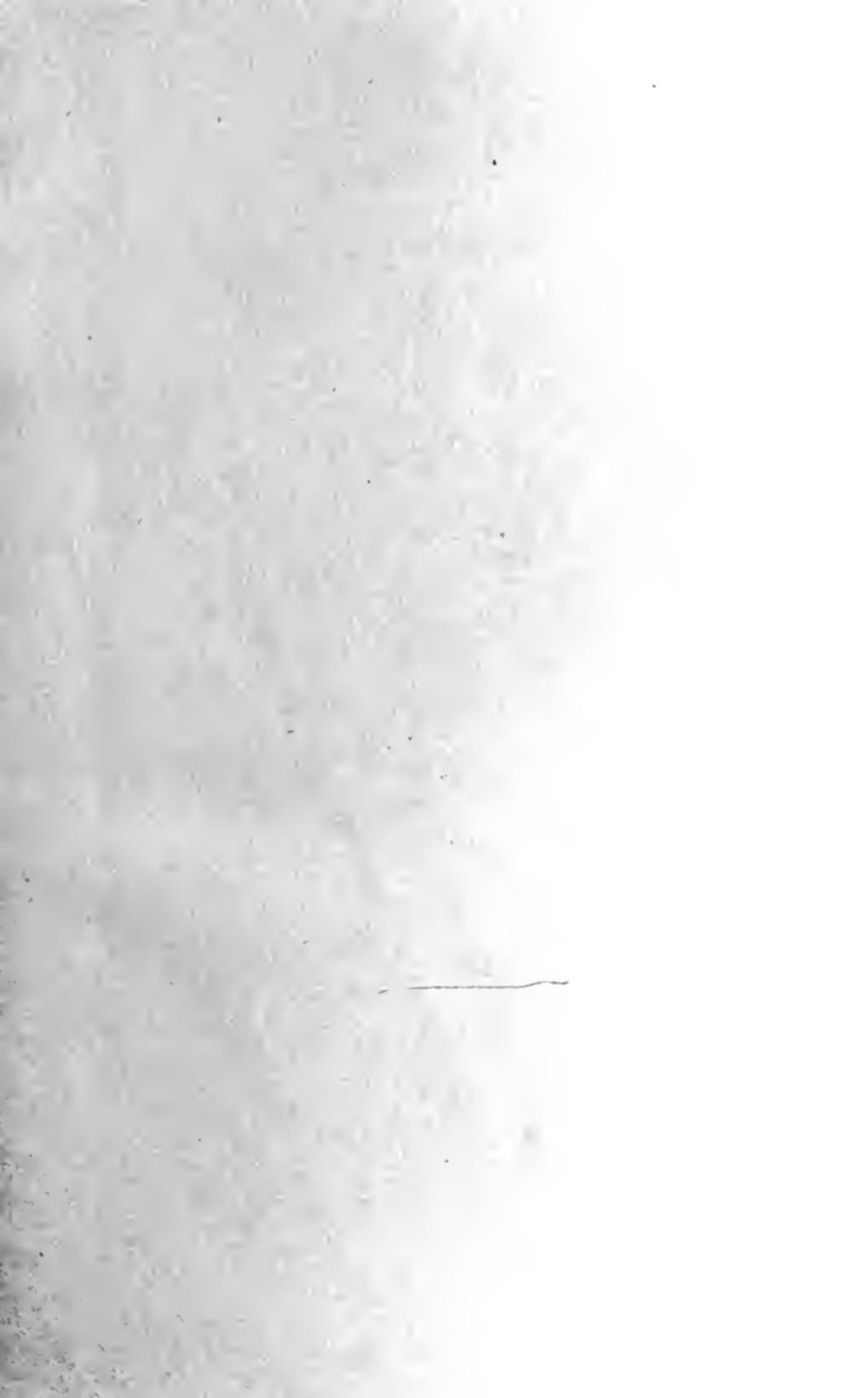
KEERBY. Your geese is safe, your reverence, for it's the wonderful thing entirely I now have seen. And the Bay of Doon that's ten miles distant looked as near to me as the cabbage haggart outside, and the three grey men were standing on the rock holding up an almighty torch that lit up all the black land lying to the east ; and following the light didn't I see Roger being carried away by the Hag and the Son of the Hag. Riding on two Spanish asses they were, holding him between them by a whisker each, and his whiskers were the length of six feet you'd think, and his nose was the length of six feet you'd think, and his eyes were the size of turnips bulging outside his head. Galloping like the wind they were, through the pass of the Barna mountains, sweeping him along with them, for ever and ever, to their woful den in the heart of the Barna hills.

CURTAIN.









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